

Strategic Intelligence Observations from the pre-Vietnam and pre-9/11 periods for the Intelligence Professional and the Policy-maker

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

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This study investigates strategic intelligence failures of the pre-Vietnam and pre-9/11 time periods. The monograph presents PEMISI (political, economic, military, information, societal, and intelligence) environmental analyses of both time periods in order to evaluate whether intelligence lessons are truly similar in both periods. The intelligence observations presented are not an exhaustive representation of the U. S. Government's intelligence lessons from these two periods. Rather they are collected from comprehensive and quality studies of Vietnam and the 9/11 Commission Report and other sources. The resulting evidence suggests that five intelligence issues are similar between the two periods. A critical look at the similarities and disparities is made as a conclusion with the warning that contextual considerations are imperative for proper application of remedies. The monograph recommends historical education for analysts of intelligence pitfalls throughout history. Additionally, a caution is offered to policy-makers against the politicization of intelligence and need to understand and trust in the processes and professionals of the intelligence community.

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INTRODUCTION

Intelligence is an essential part of making decisions. As one of the oldest professions, intelligence has generated certain lessons that ought to be codified in today's intelligence communities. The United States (U.S.) intelligence community appears to be acquiring some previously learned lessons at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. This paper analyzes strategic intelligence at the senior U.S. policy-maker level during the period just prior to the escalation in Vietnam and compares that experience to the modern-day use of strategic intelligence before 11 September 2001. In each case, serious flaws in the intelligence process and intelligence products given to senior decision-makers contributed to the controversial use of U.S. combat forces in overseas wars. This paper examines these intelligence flaws and looks for lessons on the generation and use of strategic intelligence for the U.S. government.

Key questions arise as to the effect of strategic intelligence on policy-maker's decisions. How can data best be presented? Who has the responsibility to listen to professional intelligence analysis? What integrity is needed to use intelligence for the purpose intended and not use it for other political ends? Where is the fine line between reporting of facts vice reporting to guide a decision? What about dissenting views? Is there a mechanism for a devil's advocate or red team view? Would the presenting of both sides of a situation better answer the requirement to provide information needed by the decision maker? Who decides? Where is oversight responsibility? Contemplation of such questions may provide a much wiser understanding of the use of intelligence at the highest level of a government. By examining the intelligence challenges prior to both the Vietnam War and 9/11, several strategic truths will emerge for some of these questions.

Chapter One reviews the political, military, economic, social, intelligence and information environments of the U.S. from 1960 through mid-1965. The chapter then provides an in-depth look at decisions leading up to the escalation of troops in Vietnam and how intelligence

impacted senior policy-makers and their decisions. There were important lessons regarding strategic intelligence and presidential decision-making during this period, including the issues of confidence in reporting and the “politicization” of reports. Chapter Two assesses the same environmental factors and examines the impact of strategic intelligence at the senior decision-making level as reported in the *9/11 Commission Report* and other sources.¹

Finally, Chapter Three offers an assessment of the effectiveness of intelligence at the senior policy-making level during both the period prior to the escalation in Vietnam in mid-1965 and prior to catastrophic event of 11 September 2001. Of course, lessons of one situation do not necessarily apply to another and the chapter will begin with a discussion why this is so. The paper will conclude with answers to such questions as to whether the lessons from the Vietnam period are the same as those of the period before 9/11. An analysis will be offered why the lessons of the former period apply to the later or not. From both periods of time, several observations regarding the use of strategic intelligence provide crystal clear recommendations for intelligence professionals and U.S. senior policy-makers of any era.

The use, influence, quality, distortion, or lack of intelligence has the potential of leading a country into war and or creating policies of questionable foundations with damaging foreign and domestic results. Thus, decisions of senior policy-makers that lead a country into war are supposed to be based on the soundest and best of intelligence. As a world power, the U.S. can ill-afford such pitfalls at the senior policy-making decision level. In late 2004, the George W. Bush administration realized that intelligence systems existing prior to 9/11 needed improvement and created the Office of National Intelligence by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L.108-458). The Act marked the most comprehensive reform of the U.S. Intelligence Community since its establishment over 50 years ago.

¹Much of the information in this period remains classified, yet enough was available from open sources to reveal needed improvements to intelligence processes and products.

Decisions will always need to be made, from the strategic to the tactical levels, and intelligence must weigh-in properly. The new reforms, and leveraging wisdom from historical experiences in the proper context, can lead to better strategic decisions.

As Lenin once said, “There are no morals in politics; there is only expedience.”²

²Phillip B. Davidson, *Vietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), 323.

CHAPTER ONE

I felt strongly about participating in the Vietnam War. It seemed to me – and this may shock some of my readers – and it still does, to have been one of the noblest and most unselfish wars in which the United States had ever participated. We had not been attacked as a nation. We stood to gain very little by our participation in that war. All we were trying to do there was to help a small people retain whatever measure of freedom they enjoyed, not perhaps as much as we had, but infinitely more than they were to have when the North Vietnamese finally reached Saigon.¹

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters

The road to war for the U.S. in Vietnam was littered with lessons, especially lessons on the use of intelligence. Many authors have studied the era and written comprehensive books. Still, one must be cautious when applying such “lessons” to situations to which they are not appropriate. It is also important to understand the proper context under which key events and senior policy-makers operated during the time period under study.² Since biblical times when Joshua sent two spies to Jericho into “the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab” and Moses sent his men to “spy out the land of Canaan,”³ accurate information to support decisions has been an essential and highly sought after commodity. In a similar fashion, President John F. Kennedy sent General Maxwell Taylor, U.S. Army, and Walter Rostow, then Deputy National Security Advisor, to report on Vietnam early in his administration. Their trip reports were so different that President Kennedy asked if they went to the same country.⁴ One would think, with two millennia of experience, certain rules of intelligence would be known to any bureaucracy. This does not appear so, as many have pointed out throughout history.

This chapter examines 1960 through mid-1965 and assesses the role intelligence played in policy decision making. By the end of the chapter, the reader should have a good idea of the

¹Vernon A. Walters, *Silent Missions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 409.

²Appendix A contains a timeline of relevant events concerning intelligence, world events, and decisions of key senior policy-makers.

³Phillip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession: Spies and Spying in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Norton, 1987), 1.

⁴*Ibid.*

nature of the times, an understanding of strategic intelligence and how it impacted, or failed to impact policy decisions. In addition to classical readings found in the bibliography, studies commissioned by the U.S. government to assess the Vietnam War from the BDM and RAND Corporations were used to cull intelligence observations during this period. Generally, tactical and operational level comments were not included. Understanding the nature of the times in the political, economic, military, societal, informational, and intelligence context is vital to grasp the constraints on the decision makers in each period. Therefore, the first section describes the period using these environmental factors.

U.S. Environment 1960-1965

Politically, 1960 was a campaign year for President John F. Kennedy and was the twilight year of the Eisenhower administration. 1961 was a year of hope that the “best and the brightest” were coming to Washington, DC, with the newly elected President Kennedy and would get the U.S. moving, out of the dark years of war recovery and into a period of peace and prosperity. As David Halberstam remarked about the incoming Kennedy team in his classic book, *The Best and the Brightest*:

[T]hey carried with them an exciting sense of American elitism, a sense that the best men had been summoned forth from the country to harness this dream to a new American nationalism, bring a new, strong, dynamic spirit to our historic role in world affairs, not necessarily to bring the American dream to reality here at home, but to bring it to reality elsewhere in the world. It was heady stuff, defining the American dream and giving it a new sense of purpose, taking American life, which had grown too materialistic and complacent, and giving it a new and grander mission.⁵

When considering the American environment, the 1960's were a period of tremendous economic growth and prosperity. The recoveries from World War II and the Korean War were complete and the labor force stabilized. President Kennedy authorized the largest tax cut in history. Combined with one of the largest increases in military spending to counter threats from

⁵David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York, NY: Random House, 1972), 41.

the escalating Cold War, the tax cut gave a tremendous boost to the U.S. economy. American citizens were relatively well off and free of economic stress during the 1960's.

In general, during the first half of this decade, Americans were not concerned about and barely knew why Vietnam had troubles. Society was inwardly focused, an apparent default position for Americans who felt insulated by the oceans on either side of the nation. In the latter half of the decade, a cultural revolution was fueled by antiwar platforms and a rebellion from strict social mores. Thus, American society although economically prosperous was split between generational lines by those supporting the war and those in violent opposition to it. Of course, Americans faced a great shock by the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963.

Most people received their information from the newspaper, radio, and TV media. Journalists often had accurate assessments of the war situation which were published in U.S. papers and conflicted with intelligence reporting. Looking back from the perspective of the former Ambassador to Saigon from 1961 to 1963, Frederick Nolting, Jr. noted that the American press reported little of the many good news stories. In Ambassador Nolting's view, the press was primarily interested in the "bloody side of the war and in the Saigon rumor-factory. If an American military adviser was shot, this would be headlines, but if three new schools were opened you didn't see anything written about it. So the social and economic progress was underplayed very much by the press, in my opinion."⁶

The military in the U.S. in the early 1960's was divided. Early on, General MacArthur advised President Kennedy not to get involved in land wars in Asia. Those who had experienced war in Korea and were reluctant to be involved once more in a war on the Asian continent were dubbed the "Never Again Club." General Maxwell Taylor, who was to become a principal actor in the Vietnam War, was a member of this club. In addition to politicians, senior military

⁶James C. Hasdorff, "Vietnam in Retrospect: An Interview with Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting, Jr.," *Air University Review* (January-February 1974), Available from <http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1974/jan-feb/hasdorff.html>; Internet; Accessed on 2 March 2007.

members were called either “hawks” or “doves” depending on their stand for involvement of the military in Vietnam. President Kennedy was a great fan and sponsor of the Green Berets (Special Forces). According to Donald Blaufarb, the Central Intelligence Agency chief of station in Laos, the JFK years were considered the counterinsurgency era. The JFK years also were known as the dawn of the unconventional warfare era for the U.S. Special Forces. This was in direct opposition to the theory of massive retaliation in the prior Eisenhower administration.⁷

The Road to War for the U.S. in Vietnam 1960--mid-1965

This section will chart how the U.S. became involved in the Vietnam War by following the strategic policy decisions of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. The decisions facing President Kennedy even before his opening days in office were monumental. As the timeline in Appendix A shows, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threw down the gauntlet concerning wars of liberation and communism which President Kennedy took as a direct challenge just days before his inauguration in January 1961. Attention was riveted for a time by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) involvement with the assassination of President Patrice Lumumba in the Congo. Next facing the new president were decisions regarding the debacle of the Bay of Pigs in April of 1961. This was quickly followed by the construction of the Berlin Wall and chilling of the cold war in August 1961. In addition, the race for Africa and the rest of the world was on between communist and free countries. The “space race” intensified with the manned flight of Soviet cosmonaut Gagarin orbiting the earth.

Regarding Vietnam in particular, in January 1961 during his first week in office, as a prelude to his first National Security Council (NSC) meeting, President Kennedy was handed a report by Brigadier General Edward Lansdale, CIA’s and the Defense Department’s roving expert on both covert operations and counterinsurgency, who had finished a fact finding trip and was

⁷Richard H. Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam* (New York; London: HarperCollins World; Hi Marketing, 2001), 4.

called to brief the NSC. President Kennedy later told his advisers that “for the first time it gave him a sense of the danger and urgency of the problem in Vietnam.”⁸

One of President Kennedy’s toughest decisions had to be the degree of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Loss of his elder brother and a brother-in-law in World War II during his youth may have influenced his aversion to big wars and allure of the U.S. Special Forces. Numerous requests for troop increases by the military received the response from the White House that the proposals were “taken under study.” The President and his team of advisors could send U.S. combat troops into Vietnam, but there was uncertainty whether the American people were prepared to subscribe to such a war. President Kennedy strongly believed in the ability of the Special Forces to counter such guerrilla wars. He did not want to commit combat forces because the U.S. would replicate exactly the same situation the French experienced ending in disaster at Dien Bien Phu in 1954; they would be white men fighting Asians and on Asian soil, and they would turn the entire population in favor of the Viet Cong. President Kennedy faced three choices: (1) do nothing and appear “soft” on communism; (2) send in combat troops and acquiesce to the military “hawks” heading down the road the French had already traveled; or (3) step up the U.S. commitment to a point just short of combat. In other words, the U.S. could help South Vietnam to help itself, by sending in advisors, helicopters, fighter bombers, and pilot trainers and pilots. “It could, in fact, do everything but give the Vietnamese the will and desire to win. This decision was made, and the reasons were relatively simple: there was nowhere else to go.”⁹

⁸Kenneth J. Conboy and Dale Andradé, *Spies and Commandos: How America Lost the Secret War in North Vietnam* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 34. NOTE: Hereafter, several citations are frequently further cited to Mike Gravel, *The Pentagon Papers* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971), Department of Defense, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967 (The Pentagon Papers)* and the *Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS], 1961-1963* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office).

⁹David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire* (New York, NY: Random House, 1965), 66.

The early sixties were also crucial years for North and South Vietnam. In South Vietnam, President Ngo Dinh Diem's regime was on the brink of crumbling from corruption and popular dissatisfaction. Across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), the North Vietnamese felt victorious in expelling the French from their country in what they considered the First Indochina War in 1954. Northern communists decided to take action when promises made by the Geneva Accords failed to reunite Vietnam in 1956. In 1959, Hanoi decided to expand operations in the South to unify the country in communism. Such decisions were not made unilaterally. Ho Chi Minh consulted both China and the Soviet Union about his plans and timing so as not to precipitate a nuclear war--a real threat in those days. "While Kennedy kept avoiding the hard decision of 1961--the commitment of U.S. ground forces--Ho Chi Minh, in spite of the divided council *he* received, resolutely pushed on the "South Vietnam first" strategy of Le Duan (1st Secretary) and Nguyen Chi Thanh (military commander), which he had approved in 1959."¹⁰ The competing communist factions in the North settled on a five-year plan to bring socialism to the South. When the North Vietnamese politburo elected Le Duan as first Secretary and thus second only to Ho Chi Minh, it was clear that national reunification would become the prime objective of the 1960's.¹¹

Early in 1960, the Viet Cong started systematic attacks on Diem's village officials, designed to undermine what little government authority existed outside of Saigon. During the first week of 1960, the insurgents killed fourteen village chiefs. Terror was an act of discrimination to the Viet Cong. The North targeted two types of village chiefs: the corrupt and the able. By killing the bad and corrupt village chiefs, the Viet Cong looked like benefactors to the population. By killing the able, the Viet Cong eliminated threats and effective representatives of the Saigon government. They also made school teachers prime targets, murdering hundreds. Because the Viet Cong were using schools for propaganda or because of outright intimidation, the government

¹⁰Davidson, 298.

¹¹Howard Jones, *Death of a Generation: How the Assassinations of Diem and JFK Prolonged the Vietnam War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17.

of South Vietnam (GVN) was forced to close 636 schools between 1959 and the end of 1961. Village officials and teachers were murdered and decapitated in front of their entire villages. Hidden Viet Cong cadres slowly came to the surface. Terrorism spotlighted the corruption of officials, and wholesale murders demonstrated that the Diem government could not protect its own officials and therefore could not protect its people.¹²

President Diem of South Vietnam prevented the reunification of North and South Vietnam by refusing to hold the specified vote for reunification in 1956 as called for by the Geneva Accords of 1954. Diem was financed and supported by the U.S. in order to prevent a communist foothold in Southeast Asia. With the Cold War heating up in Europe and the communist race for Africa in full tilt, President Kennedy turned his attention to Southeast Asia as a place to make a stand against communism. With an eye to upcoming re-election and 1962 Congressional elections, President Kennedy felt he had to make a stand and not appear soft on communism.

In mid-April 1961, two events led to an enhanced U.S. role in South Vietnam. First, the Kennedy administration agreed to a ceasefire in Laos followed by neutralization talks in an attempt to wind down the North Vietnamese supported Laotian communist insurgency and respect the border with South Vietnam. Second, President Kennedy's approval of the CIA's plan to overthrow the Castro regime in Cuba resulted in one of the greatest debacles in the history of U.S. foreign policy. Cuban military forces either killed or captured every member of a group of Cuban exiles involved in a landing in Cuba at a place called the "Bay of Pigs." President Fidel Castro blasted the White House for engineering the coup attempt.¹³

¹²Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire*, 64-65.

¹³Jones, 38.

Thus, early in his presidency, President Kennedy was not impressed but instead highly embarrassed with failed CIA operations in Cuba and the Congo. Historically, he was blamed for canceling air support to the Bay of Pigs operation at the last moment, but in retrospect, history has viewed this decision as probably the correct choice. Additionally, in September 1962, intelligence estimates were proven inaccurate on the critical question of whether the USSR was implanting nuclear weapons in Cuba. President Kennedy was very wary of both CIA intelligence and operations given this history of failures early in his administration.¹⁴

Similar to the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the intelligence system that failed to deliver had to be strengthened. But there was no question of asking the CIA to assume a greater military role. That agency was in disgrace.¹⁵ The first thing that happened was the change in the Directors of Central Intelligence (DCI). President Kennedy chose John McCone to replace Allen Dulles as DCI in August 1961.

Rather than change the CIA by law, President Kennedy accepted a plan to reform military intelligence. Implementation of this plan fell to the new Secretary of Defense, Robert M. McNamara. The outgoing Secretary of Defense, Thomas Gates, warned him that the missile gap was illusory and that the consolidation of military intelligence might be desirable. So Secretary McNamara decided to accept the recommendation of a presidential study group that reported in December 1960 that described the military intelligence system as “duplicatory and cumbersome,” and called for the establishment of a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). A Department of Defense directive authorized the new agency in August 1961, and the DIA began to operate on 1 October 1961.¹⁶

¹⁴Harold P. Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes, 1962-1968* (Langley, VA: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1998), 82.

¹⁵Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Cloak and Dollar: A History of American Secret Intelligence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 187-88.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

After impatient prompts for the CIA to conduct paramilitary covert operations in North Vietnam, President Kennedy signed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 55 in late June 1961. This document, “Relations of the JSC to the President in Cold War Operations,” assigned paramilitary operations to the Pentagon. For the past decade the CIA, not the military, had handled paramilitary operations. Follow-on NSAM’s 56 and 57 supported this with details, putting the CIA in a supporting role except for those operations that were “wholly covert or disavowable.” Operational details were gathered by the Pentagon in what became Operation Switchback and OPPLAN 34A.¹⁷ According to Kenneth Conboy and Dale Andrade in their book *Spies and Commandos*, “In those formative years of the Cold War, this was new and untested ground, but the general consensus was that the military was best at fighting and the CIA best at spying, particularly after the Bay of Pigs debacle of 1961.”¹⁸

The truth is in the summer of 1961, nobody in either Washington or Saigon seems to have thought seriously of using American combat troops to fight the Viet Cong. Rather, conventional thought held that the United States troops, if brought in at all, should be used to train ARVN forces, and perhaps to relieve the South Vietnamese troops of static defense duties, which would free ARVN and to go after the Viet Cong.¹⁹

In 1961, the concept of committing U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam’s aid repelled President Kennedy. To his confidant, Arthur Schlesinger, the President compared sending in U.S. fighting forces to Vietnam to an alcoholic’s first drink. He told Schlesinger that “the troops will march in . . . then we will be told we have to send in more troops. It’s like taking a drink, the effect wears off, and you have to take another.”²⁰

By 1962, the overriding U.S. viewpoint was to limit involvement in what President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara regarded as essentially a Vietnamese war. In the spring of 1962, the military situation in South Vietnam was showing some signs of improvement thanks

¹⁷Refer to Appendix A, dates of September to November 1963.

¹⁸Conboy and Andrade, 84.

¹⁹Davidson, 293-4.

²⁰Ibid., 298.

primarily to the arrival of U.S. helicopters in South Vietnam. By midyear the prospects looked bright for the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. To some, the end to the insurgency seemed in sight, although that optimism was not without the recognition that there were unsolved political problems and serious weak spots in areas of the military effort. U.S. leadership, both on the scene in Vietnam and in Washington, DC, was confident though cautiously optimistic. It was later shown that these optimistic reports were based on rosy pictures painted by Diem government sources and not quite as promising as some were apt to believe. Here, President Kennedy's skepticism in intelligence proved valuable.

Meanwhile, apparently unrelated events in other parts of the world were asserting direct influence on U.S. policy for Vietnam. Developments in Berlin, Cuba, and Laos overshadowed Vietnam, and forced the Kennedy administration to put Vietnam in the perspective of other U.S. world interests. One of the most intense of these was the Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962. Thus, with respect to Indochina, the Kennedy administration decided on the following objectives, according to the BDM study of strategic lessons learned in Vietnam:

- To seek the neutralization of Laos
- To avoid an open ended Asian mainland land war
- To seek the withdrawal of U.S. military support personnel and advisers from the Republic of Vietnam
- To treat the insurgency in the Republic of Vietnam as fundamentally a Vietnamese matter
- To increase pressure on the Government of Vietnam to make the necessary reforms and make the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces fight harder
- To put the lid on bureaucratic and political pressures for increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam²¹

Yet, the administration's policies in South Vietnam, based on the idealistic proposition that a Western-style democratic regime could be established there, that the Americans would

²¹BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975*, Vol 5, *Planning* (McLean, VA: BDM Corporation, 1980), 7-13, 14.

accomplish what the incompetent French colonists had been unable to do, was doomed to failure.²²

The introduction of U.S. helicopter companies to South Vietnam caused a major shift of the scales in 1962. The helicopters contributed to the perception of a period of false success, buttressed by overly optimistic intelligence reporting from the field. The U.S. manpower commitment rose from around 900 men in November 1961, to 11,326 by the end of 1962. The U.S. permitted its advisers and pilots to enter into actual combat with the Viet Cong, and 32 Americans died as the result of enemy action during 1961 to 1962. The U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) to Vietnam was re-designated as the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) taking on many operational tasks not performed by its predecessor.²³ President Kennedy decided to establish the MACV as an expansion of the U.S. advisory effort in South Vietnam because he was deeply concerned about communist encroachment in Southeast Asia.²⁴ The intelligence section of the MACV had a slow start primarily due to leadership challenges and further obscured an accurate intelligence picture according to George Allen, a senior analyst at the time.²⁵

During 1963, President Kennedy became extremely dissatisfied with Diem's harsh treatment of political dissidents and his conduct of the war against the North Vietnamese sponsored insurgency. This in part was caused by sensational media coverage of monks lighting themselves on fire in protest to President Diem's religious policies.²⁶ Through his advisors, President Kennedy agreed to the quiet encouragement by the CIA of a group of South

²²Stephen Richards Graubard, *Command of Office: How War, Secrecy, and Deception Transformed the Presidency from Theodore Roosevelt to George W. Bush* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2004), 17.

²³Davidson, 300-301.

²⁴Mark Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 5.

²⁵George W. Allen, *None so Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*. (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2001).

²⁶Refer to Appendix A, 11 June 1963.

Vietnamese generals to overthrow Diem but not to kill him. The generals ousted Diem on 1 November 1963, and killed both Diem and his influential brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, a few days later. President Kennedy's decision, which displayed the administration's considerable ignorance about South Vietnamese politics and potential successors to Diem, severely damaged the government of South Vietnam's (GVN) war effort. For two years after Diem's death, several men held the top GVN office, but none of them proved capable of strengthening the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and staving off the Communists while also maintaining the favor of the U.S. and key South Vietnamese political groups.²⁷ By the end of the same month, President Kennedy himself was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on 22 November 1963. This made Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, the U.S. President and Commander-in-Chief.

President Johnson, greatly enamored with domestic social welfare issues which he termed "The Great Society," now had to lead the nation in foreign policy and military matters which were not his strength. Priorities for President Johnson made use of his legislative prowess and centered on the Great Society he promoted: education, medical care, and voting reforms. According to President Johnson's memoirs and with the help of many advisors kept on from the Kennedy Administration, his resultant foreign policy objectives toward Vietnam eventually became: (1) insure that [North Vietnamese] aggression did not succeed; (2) to make it possible for the South Vietnamese to build their country and their future in their own way; and (3) to convince Hanoi that working out a peaceful settlement was to the advantage of all concerned.²⁸ These goals followed the initial inclination of President Johnson to simply continue the policies of his predecessors to protect Southeast Asia from communism.²⁹

²⁷Moyar, 5.

²⁸Graubard, 370.

²⁹Graubard, 368.

Late in 1963, after Kennedy and Diem's assassinations, Ambassador Lodge described "the situation to President Johnson in realistic and blunt language. 'The picture is bad,' Lodge told him. 'If Vietnam is to be saved, you, Mr. President, are going to have to do it.' Johnson responded instantly. 'I am not going to lose Vietnam. I'm not going to be the president who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went.'"³⁰

By early 1964, there were increased Viet Cong assaults on U.S. targets, and the U.S. had not seriously retaliated. American Soldiers had been killed and a U.S. Navy ship sunk without serious reprisal.³¹ The limited "precision strikes" of the U.S. after the daylight attacks of 2 August 1964, on the *USS Maddox* strengthened the view of the North Vietnamese Politburo that the U.S.--probably for internal political reasons--would not retaliate. The events surrounding the *USS Maddox* were used politically to rapidly pass a pre-prepared military authorization bill through the U.S. Congress and essentially gave the Johnson administration a blank check to prosecute the Vietnam problem as they saw fit. The information provided Congress by the White House and the Pentagon proved false, flawed, and exaggerated, not very different from that offered to the general public.³² Looked at from the point of view of Ho Chi Minh and General Giap, (a North Vietnamese Army general) the U.S. richly merited that epithet of "paper tiger."

The summer of 1964 was a campaign year and President Johnson, "the peace candidate," wanted no crisis over Vietnam. Polls showed that more than two-thirds of the American people paid little or no attention to Vietnam, and President Johnson was content with that indifference. When President Johnson said (as he did on 12 and 29 August 1964) that he would not expand the war by either bombing the North or by "committing a good many American boys to fighting a war that I think ought to be fought by the boys of Asia," he fooled Ho Chi Minh and his compatriots with American election year politics and polemics. Later in 1964, toward the end of

³⁰Davidson, 304.

³¹Refer to Appendix A for a listing of attacks and events: 2/3/64, 2/7/64, 5/2/64, 7/4/64, 10/11/64.

³²Graubard, 18.

their five year plan, the North Vietnamese assumed that the U.S. would not respond to the communist escalation with ground forces, and committed one of the biggest errors in judgment of the Vietnam War. They apparently had taken President Johnson at his word when he made his electoral promises during the 1964 presidential campaign that he was not about to send American boys halfway around the globe to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.³³

After the 1964 presidential election was overwhelmingly won, President Johnson had to face up to the probability of a defeat in South Vietnam. His senior advisers, military and civilian alike, urged him to do something--anything--to alter the crumbling situation. The President held numerous conferences resulting in very few decisions. In late November 1964, he called, now Ambassador, Maxwell Taylor in from Saigon. Taylor's report on the state of affairs in South Vietnam was so dismal that he had to leave the White House by the rear door to avoid revealing to the waiting reporters that (in Secretary McNamara's words), "the situation was going to hell." For once Secretary McNamara was right.³⁴

By December 1964, MACV had received hard intelligence that one North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Main Force Regiment had arrived in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam and that two more regiments were following closely behind. The three regiments, the 101st, 95th, and 32nd, meant that the entire 325th NVA Division would soon be present in northwestern South Vietnam. This important decision by the North Vietnamese Politburo to send its regular units into the South was one of the "hinge events" of the Vietnam War. It changed the war from a Viet Cong insurrection, supported more or less openly by the Communist North, into an invasion of the sovereign nation of South Vietnam by North Vietnam. It began the change from a guerrilla-counterinsurgency war to a conventional war of large scale divisions, corps, air forces, and naval flotillas.³⁵

³³Moyar, 6.

³⁴Ibid., 321-324.

³⁵Ibid., 324.

The year 1965 saw the U.S. shift from “helping the Vietnamese people help themselves” to fighting a full scale war on and over the land mass of Southeast Asia. According to author Phillip Davidson, the spark which ignited this major U.S. reversal of policy occurred on 7 February 1965, when the Viet Cong attacked the U.S. air base at Pleiku in the western Highlands, causing heavy material destruction and some American casualties (details in Appendix A). But the real factors which brought about the policy reversal were a combination of foreign and domestic pressures urging President Johnson to do something about Vietnam. Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy summed it up in a memo when he wrote that the Communists “see Vietnam falling into their laps in the fairly near future.”³⁶

Finally, in mid-June 1965, Ambassador Taylor sent a cable confirming MACV Commander General Westmoreland’s pessimistic view of the military situation in the South. This cable temporarily crushed Washington’s opposition to greater U.S. ground force involvement in Vietnam. On 22 June 1965, General Wheeler, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, cabled General Westmoreland that forty-four combat battalions would be phased into South Vietnam as soon as possible. On 26 June 1965, General Westmoreland received authority to commit U.S. troops when in the U.S. Commander, “MACV’s judgment their use is necessary to strengthen the relative position of GVN forces.” The very next day, General Westmoreland conducted an offensive operation in War Zone D, northwest of Saigon, using the U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade, an Australian battalion, and about five battalions of ARVN infantry. This is how the U.S. became locked into a ground war in Asia.³⁷

The next section of this chapter will look at the specific role intelligence had in senior policy-maker’s decisions. Given the context of the environment and events briefly outlined, it is

³⁶Ibid., 333.

³⁷Ibid., 349-50.

not too difficult to imagine that contemporary, well informed decision makers transplanted back into this time period may very well have made the exact same decisions.

Strategic Intelligence During the Pre-escalation to the Vietnam War

The first thing to understand about intelligence is that it is the best information available at a given moment in time and not infallible. In *Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures Are Inevitable*, Richard K. Betts reaches an excellent conclusion regarding strategic intelligence and decision making by remarking, “Escalation in Vietnam, after all, was a hedge against allowing China to be tempted to “devour” the rest of Southeast Asia. The interaction of analytic uncertainty and decisional prudence is a vicious circle that makes the segregation of empirical intelligence and normative policy an unattainable Platonic ideal.”³⁸ As events unfold, there is no certainty to be found in intelligence reports, and decision makers must use caution in making the best decisions possible. As just seen in the previous section of this chapter, White House decision makers did not have a great deal of faith in intelligence products during the early 1960’s due to the Bay of Pigs and error in 1962 concerning missiles in Cuba.

Taking a broad view of the intelligence environment, there was an unbalance and a specific hierarchy of collection and reporting left over in the CIA from its formative years. The first string of intelligence officers were dedicated to the Cold War in the European theater. The next echelon studied China and its emerging threat. The leftovers were assigned to Southeast Asia and in particular Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos.³⁹ The division between operations and analysis was unbalanced, heavily weighted toward operations, and not remedied until DCI John McCone was brought aboard by President Kennedy and implemented administrative reforms at the CIA.

³⁸Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz, *Strategic Intelligence: Windows into a Secret World: An Anthology* (Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing, Co., 2004), 108.

³⁹Orrin DeForest and David Chanoff, *Slow Burn: The Rise and Bitter Fall of American Intelligence in Vietnam* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

To recall, Director John McCone had replaced Director Allen Dulles in mid-1961, following the failure of the Bay of Pigs. McCone was a California businessman and experienced bureaucrat who had the large task of setting straight the CIA after its many perceived failures of the early sixties. “McCone is regarded as the DCI who built up and organized both the intelligence gathering and analysis functions. McCone’s organizational and managerial skills must have been very valuable at this point in the life of the CIA and of the intelligence community.”⁴⁰ Prior to McCone’s leadership, the importance of intelligence gathering operations far outweighed the importance of the analysis function. McCone has been credited with bringing a balance to the mix. By 1960, the CIA was merely 13 years old and inherited much from its predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Strategic intelligence products were conveyed to senior policy-makers in a simple manner primarily by the DCI. During President Johnson’s administration, the CIA abandoned President Truman’s “Daily Summary” and produced the “President’s Checklist.” This was one of the most successful and longest-running publications, and its name has since changed to “President’s Daily Brief” (PDB). Because of concerns about the sensitivity of the content and because McCone was finding the only sure way to get to the President was in writing, the Checklist/PDB became a newspaper-style publication for only the President and a very few top officials, such as the Secretaries of State and Defense.⁴¹ Meanwhile the fledgling DIA was organizing and struggling to submit relevant intelligence. A major success was credited to the DIA for discovering the missile sites on Cuba leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The other major player in the intelligence field was State Department’s Intelligence and Research Division (INR). In retrospect, the intelligence reports from the INR were consistently

⁴⁰Stansfield Turner, *Burn before Reading: Presidents, CIA Directors, and Secret Intelligence* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2005), 99.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 111.

right on target concerning the events in Vietnam and Southeast Asia but usually extremely long and not timely enough to impact decisions.

Three products of finished strategic intelligence were issued to senior policy-makers: National Intelligence Estimates (NIE's) (both secret and unclassified versions), Current Intelligence Weeklies (CIW's), and Intelligence Reports (IR's) from State's INR. The first two reports originated from the CIA. Each product had a different flavor. The IR's from State were the only ones with in-depth analysis, in some cases running to more than 50 or even 100 pages. The CIW's were a series produced by CIA's Office of Current Intelligence and covered only a highlighted selection of current events and their significance, on a worldwide basis, with seldom more than two or three pages for a given item. Likewise, the NIE's were also tightly compressed reports produced by very senior analysts. NIE's sometimes covered regions or issues and those which were limited to a single country usually ran five to fifteen pages.⁴²

Finally, who are the policy-makers? By far the most important is the President. Then there are relevant officials of the executive branch: the National Security Adviser, the Secretary of State and his or her principal subordinates, and depending on the subject matter the Secretary of Defense and officials from the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Treasury, Commerce, or Agriculture. The DCI and other officials of the intelligence community are not included. A conspicuous exception was William Casey, the DCI under President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1986. Casey managed Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign and some thought he really wanted to be Secretary of State. He was made DCI instead and given cabinet rank, a policy-making position that no other DCI has had. Casey was absorbed in policy and insisted on participating in policy which President Reagan apparently welcomed. Other DCI's and other Presidents have generally taken the view that participating in making policy, or even in giving policy advice, would interfere with objective intelligence assessment.

Richard Helms, who held the DCI job under Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, described the DCI's role as helping "to keep the game honest."⁴³

Senior Policy-maker's Decisions and Use of Strategic Intelligence 1960--mid-1965

Intelligence professionals found themselves in quite a different relationship with the new President when Johnson stepped into office. President Truman, while skeptical of secret intelligence activities, oversaw the construction of an extensive intelligence apparatus the basis of what still exists today from the *National Security Act of 1947*. President Eisenhower was an avid consumer of intelligence and President Kennedy, as seen earlier, staked his reputation on the CIA at the Bay of Pigs, even though he was a huge fan of James Bond novels by the then new author Ian Fleming. Unlike these three predecessors, President Johnson treated intelligence with disdain. President Truman wanted a daily secret newspaper. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy were genuinely interested in learning what was going on in the world. But President Johnson wanted only to have the intelligence apparatus confirm what he already believed.

President Johnson hated getting two sets of opinions from his advisers. He wanted clear policy recommendations that he could either follow or not follow. At an early meeting, President Johnson set the tone telling his advisors that several heads in the U.S. team in Saigon would roll, and plainly stating that he "wanted no more divisions of opinion, no more bickering, and any person that did not conform to this policy should be removed."⁴⁴ President Johnson reportedly once observed: "Policy-making is like milking a fat cow. You see the milk coming out, then press more and the milk bubbles and flows; and just as the bucket is full, the cow with its tail whips the

⁴²Central Intelligence Agency, Re-Examining Our Perceptions on Vietnam, July 1996, Available from https://www.cia.gov/csi/kent_csi/docs/v17i4a01p_0052.htm; Internet; accessed on 27 January 2007.

⁴³Pat M. Holt, *Secret Intelligence and Public Policy: A Dilemma of Democracy* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1995), 10.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 106.

bucket and all is spilt. That's what the CIA does to policy-making."⁴⁵ As soon as President Johnson's proverbial intelligence "bucket of milk" was full, and he felt he had a set of clear indications supporting a certain policy, the CIA would provide information that wiped out his underlying assumptions and invalidated his decision (spilt the milk). Substitute "intelligence community" for "CIA" and the same frustration could occur in modern times. President Johnson wanted intelligence to support his domestic politics and was highly frustrated when it failed to do so.

One observation here is the need to avoid using intelligence for political ends. How can this distortion be averted? Is it incumbent on the provider of intelligence? Is it reliant on the integrity of the consumer of intelligence reports? After all, strategic intelligence is specifically designed to answer questions of policy-makers in order for them to make the best decisions possible. Where is that line between providing the answer versus leading the decision maker to a clear course of action? Should intelligence in an administration known to lack trust in its products, be "wishy-washy" so as to prevent "politicization" of its reports? These are the hard questions that experienced providers of intelligence need good judgment to face. In the end, intelligence must state the facts in the proper context; answer the bidding of the policy-makers, but stop short of the very thin line or gray area which would constitute a policy decision. This is not an easy task, when options seem clear to the experienced analyst providing the information who may have been following a subject for years. After all, it is not the analyst who is elected and charged with the responsibility to make policy.

President Kennedy tended to approach his major decisions as crises that needed the brain power of his team of experts hailed from academia and public service. But once his crisis teams had assembled and discussed the subjects, it appeared that President Kennedy in close council with his trusted brother, Robert, and perhaps at times his Chief of Staff, reached his decisions in

⁴⁵Johnson and Wirtz, 180.

private. He often held the military at arms length, particularly General Curtis “bombs away” LeMay, USAF, whom he found particularly distasteful, and other Pentagon hawks clamoring for decisive military action in Vietnam. Being a politician above all else, President Kennedy strived to keep all factions happy and often delayed taking action until an item was taken under further study. Witness to this crisis style of decision making are the Bay of Pigs debacle, Berlin Wall crisis, Cuban Missile crisis, and the Diem assassination crisis.

How did President Johnson come to decisions? As seen in Appendix A, he formed many study groups consisting largely of the “best and the brightest” members inherited from President Kennedy’s administration. He also began Tuesday luncheons to informally discuss weighty policy matters. Additionally, he called upon members of former administrations, calling them a “Council of Wise Men” to solicit advice. Despite all this, the personal traits of President Johnson dictated his decision making ability.

Early in his presidency, Johnson was simply much more interested in domestic issues than in foreign affairs. He wasn’t enamored in covert action. And when he did become interested in foreign affairs, they were almost all related to Vietnam. But he also came to the oval office with the legislator’s mindset. He preferred to think things through on his own, build ad hoc committees to work on problems, and rely on his gut. Richard Helms remembered that he was surprised, and then almost ashamed at his naiveté, when he realized that **‘the President of the United States does not make his important decisions in an orderly way or the way the political scientists say they should be done or the way the organizational experts would like to see them done or, in fact the way 99% of the American people understand that they are done. This is a highly personal affair.** [Emphasis added]⁴⁶

Given all the advisors surrounding President Johnson, it appears he preferred to tentatively and privately come to his own decisions.

Intelligence Lessons 1960--Mid-1965

The tragedy during this key decision making period is that none of the generated intelligence products had much, if any, impact on senior policy-makers according to most

⁴⁶Turner, 109.

accounts. Most intelligence products were blatantly ignored and had zero impact. In some cases, intelligent products were requested weeks *after* decisions had been made as can be seen in Appendix A. “During most of the Vietnam period intelligence was simply irrelevant to policy. The policymaker’s minds were made up.”⁴⁷ George Allen, a senior intelligence analyst who worked for CIA, DIA, and Army Intelligence during his career, remembered a poignant example of one of the faults of the intelligence system at the time:

One episode that involved me concerned the alleged massive buildup of North Vietnamese forces at Dien Bien Phu in April, 1961, at the height of the flurry of interest in Laos. The problem stemmed from a U-2 reconnaissance mission, the first over Dien Bien Phu, whose photography showed a large barracks area--apparently new--along with substantial construction activity. . . . We had firm information from other sources that the division there--the 316th--had been building permanent barracks, storage, and training facilities at Dien Bien Phu for its own use in phased increments for the past several years. The facilities observed to be under construction fit what we knew of the final increment scheduled for completion in 1961. Thus, there was nothing new or dramatic in what was happening at Dien Bien Phu; there was no buildup of additional forces there; there was no greater threat to Laos than had existed for the past seven years. The photo interpreters had simply reported the difference between what was evident in 1961 and what they had seen when Dien Bien Phu had last been photographed in 1954, and the briefers had been off and running without checking to see what might be known from other sources about events at Dien Bien Phu during the intervening years. (The “crisis” over the Soviet brigade in Cuba in 1979-1980 was reminiscent in many respects of April 1961 concern over the North Vietnamese buildup at Dien Bien Phu. What it basically illustrates is the **danger of excessive compartmentalization of information** [emphasis added], which should have been one of the lessons learned from the Pearl Harbor intelligence failure.)⁴⁸

In this vignette, George Allen observed that the lack of coordination between intelligence disciplines of Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) to other disciplines such as Signal (SIGINT) or Human Intelligence (HUMINT) has caused problems in intelligence production since Pearl Harbor. What he wished for was an all source or fusion center for intelligence to eliminate compartmentalization at the time between disciplines of intelligence.

Harold K Ford of the CIA recently wrote an interesting list of lessons for intelligence professionals from the Vietnam period found in Appendix C. He wrote the list partially in

⁴⁷Knightley, 97.

⁴⁸Allen, 128-9.

response to McNamara's 1995 book *In Retrospect*. As the first item in the list, he dubs communication of intelligence to policy-makers as a tough occupational hazard and eternal problem for intelligence providers. It may truly be an art form in communication to select the correct words, method, and style of reporting for the PDB. Plus, the audience's (the President's) style of receiving information truly matters. McCone apparently discovered that President Johnson absorbed information better in the written form versus from an oral presentation. Thus McCone used the PDB to transmit information in writing because he was not invited to Tuesday lunch meetings. Another point from Mr. Ford's first lesson was that policy-makers were simply too busy to absorb the judgments of relatively junior and unknown intelligence officers. This was a matter of trust in the intelligence process. So in effect, there were two parts to the first lesson: (1) how to communicate in a manner that the intelligence is properly absorbed by policy-makers, and (2) how to develop and maintain the trust of the policy-maker's in intelligence products. Mr. Ford recommended clearly stating facts and not pre-censoring analytical judgments in order to sell them to higher authorities.

The second and eighth items listed as lessons by Mr. Ford stemming from Vietnam concerned the "politicization" of intelligence reporting. He stated that reports of the Vietnam era were "rosied" up by higher echelons of intelligence professionals to be more palatable to their readers. Additionally, the lack of attention paid to intelligence products when the information did not agree with predisposed and political agendas of the readers was another aspect of this problem. The later can not be influenced by the intelligence professional and was incumbent on the integrity of the policy-makers.

The final piece of wisdom from Vietnam intelligence experience, as reported by Mr. Ford, was the necessity for the analyst creating intelligence products to have true cultural knowledge of the geographic target area as well as experience in the Washington, DC, tribal area. There is no substitution for being immersed in the history, politics, and society of a region. It is

the duty of the intelligence provider to translate foreign cultures so the U.S. policy-maker also has the proper context for their decisions.

The BDM Corporation wrote a comprehensive, multiple volume report in 1980 concerning strategic lessons learned in Vietnam. Intelligence lessons are sprinkled throughout the volumes, and Appendix D lists some very important observations. Although, the title stated that the lessons were strategic, many of the intelligence lessons listed were tactically and operationally oriented. Because senior policy-makers were indeed making operational and tactical decisions from Washington, DC, in the Vietnam War; such as when, where, and how many bombs to drop, it was appropriate at that time to include a comprehensive list of lessons that were not only strategic per se. In addition to intelligence lessons, the BDM had some very astute lessons concerning strategic decision making. These have been segregated from the discussion below and placed in Appendix F for reference. The observations by BDM about strategic decision making and the importance of strategic intelligence appear as true today as when they were made in the Vietnam context.

The BDM report from Vietnam stressed that knowledge of the enemy was an important intelligence requirement at all levels of intelligence from the tactical to the strategic level. Specifically, an analyst must have a deep understanding and knowledge of an enemy's history, goals, organization, leadership, habits, strengths and weaknesses, and above all, his character and will. This is an excellent component listing of cultural knowledge. Again, BDM noted that senior decision makers did not understand the enemy, his will, or how the policy-maker's decisions would impact the enemy's courses of action.

The need for an all source intelligence center fusing all intelligence disciplines was a recommendation made by BDM from Vietnam that the U.S. Army took seriously. When reorganizing after the Vietnam War, Army intelligence eventually named its operational component the All Source Production Center. The BDM Corporation also stated that the in-theatre intelligence effort must have the same highly sensitive information available to senior

intelligence analysts in Washington, DC. In other words, this was the compartmentalization issue again.

Another point the BDM report made concerning intelligence from the Vietnam effort concerned the accuracy of intelligence products and faith in them by policy-makers. Intelligence must be unbiased, objective, and drawn from all available sources. BDM suggested that when such products were coupled with a war gaming scenario, this would provide policy-makers with a realistic outcome of their actions. Appendix A shows that results of war gaming called SIGMA I (April-May 1964) and SIGMA II (September 1964) went unheeded by decision makers.

Finally, the RAND Corporation suggested intelligence lessons as early as 1969. Appendix E lists a small selection from the RAND report concerning intelligence in decision making. Once again, quality cultural knowledge of the enemy was stressed as an essential element of intelligence. The report also called into question the intelligence methodology at the time of using intricate indicators to predict success or failure. More of what the RAND Corporation predicts from 1969 concerning lessons and mistaken lessons from the Vietnam War will be examined in Chapter Three when an analysis is made of the lessons from this period against those from the pre-9/11 period of time.

A key player and eyewitness to the unfolding events of 1960-mid 1965 and beyond was General Maxwell Taylor. In his book, *Swords and Plowshares*, he observed, “Such an explanation would seem to convict our decision-makers of having committed the country to a disastrous course of action on the basis of insufficient information, but in fairness to them, one should recognize that the requirement for a decision always preceded the availability of most of the needed information.”⁴⁹ So, although history may read strategic intelligence estimates with hindsight, General Taylor points out that the policy-maker’s need to decide and act often preceded available intelligence and made them irrelevant. Coupled with a lack of faith in the

⁴⁹Ibid., 1-32.

intelligence products, this could be said to be the great intelligence problem of this particular time period.

A summary of the observations from the last section of this chapter is found in the first table in Appendix G. Intelligence professionals have a direct influence on the items marked with a check in the “I” column. Policy-makers control factors for those in the “P” column.

CHAPTER TWO

If we and the Iraqi government cannot achieve stability and a military U.S. withdrawal in the coming very few years . . . the region and U.S. interests are going to be severely menaced for the next 10 years or more. The Mid-East is vital to our international interests . . . Vietnam was not.

General Barry McCaffrey, USA, Retired

This chapter explores the time leading up to the catastrophic events of 11 September 2001 and subsequent road to war in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)) and Iraq, (Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)). Once again key players and the environmental context in which they used or did not use strategic intelligence in decision making are examined.⁵⁰ The same environmental factors of politics, economics, military, social, information and intelligence are used to first understand the cultural context of the U.S. in the pre-9/11 years.

The U.S. Environment, 1998--2001

Politically, the period 1998 to 2001 saw the change between two very different administrations, those of President William Clinton, a Democrat, and incoming President George W. Bush, a Republican. President Clinton's scandal concerning Monica Lewinsky dominated the news for almost an entire year. No other name appeared in the news more often than "Lewinsky" in 1998. As is frequently the case, Americans were domestically focused and not overly concerned with world politics. The "hanging chad" scandal of President Bush's election in Florida dominated national news from the November 2000, elections until his inauguration in January 2001.

Looking at the information environment, this period was the zenith of the rise of the internet in the U.S. Breaking news was available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on internet sites such as CNN.com and BBC.com. Newspapers, as a primary source of news, began

⁵⁰Refer to Appendix B for a listing of key policy-makers and significant events between 1998 and 2003.

to decline as a combination of internet, radio, and TV filled a faster life style's need for faster news. Satellite communication technology brought a surge of individual cell phones and a sense of instantaneousness to news broadcasts. News was no longer relegated to a short TV program at night and the morning newspaper as in earlier years. Information and news became truly 24/7 phenomena. TV news programs followed viewer interests through sophisticated rating statistics. An Information Revolution was in full tilt and split a generation between those who did versus those who did not use the internet. At this time, the internet explosion was not generally viewed as a negative phenomenon. The worldwide web was thought to "globalize" the world. Because of this some U.S. businesses began to think in global strategies rather than their old marketing aims.

Economically, this was a prosperous period for the U.S. It was a logical platform for President Bush's campaign to stand on tax cut economics in 2000, which may have contributed to the slim margins between candidates in the November 2000 election. Unemployment and inflation were the lowest since the 1960's.

Socially, terrorism was not on the mind of the typical American who enjoyed a relatively safe and secure lifestyle. In fact, terrorism was far from the thoughts of most Americans except for those who had a personal interest in the USS *Cole* or the African Embassy bombings involving friends or relatives. Even then, the episodes were considered passing occurrences. There were no rifts in society like the Cultural Revolution of the 1960's other than those caused by the Information Revolution described above. Nor was there any significant recovery from any war trauma because the Cold War had been basically inert and was considered over in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In general, if thought about at all, there was a generally good feeling that the West had won the Cold War and now not much could get in the way of living the "good ole American way of life." Thus, the bombings of 11 September 2001, of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, created a shock for Americans. Historically, the events probably exceeded all previous shocks to U.S. society such as Pearl Harbor, and Presidential assassinations.

The end of the Cold War did cause some repercussions in the intelligence field. Who was the enemy now? Where should the U.S. focus its intelligence efforts? To focus world-wide without a sole major enemy on whom to concentrate was a large task. The Cold War peace dividend was expected to provide fewer funds to do a larger task. For the intelligence community, this was a worrisome challenge. But no serious organizational changes across the intelligence fields were envisioned other than to survive anticipated budget cuts. Senior intelligence officials mostly hunkered down to fight for resources and protect their particular niches in the expected budget cuts, especially faced with a new president coming into office. This is not to say intelligence agencies were sleeping on the job. As the *9/11 Commission Report* clearly showed, the CIA had a robust team of analysts following terrorism and focused on Usama Bin Ladin and the al-Qaeda network. Strategic intelligence was still transmitted to senior policy-makers by the DCI through the President's Daily Brief (PDB) and National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) both classified and unclassified reports. The DCI during this period was George Tenet, an experienced professional. The intelligence community was more mature than in the early 1960's, consisting of more agencies due to an evolution of technologies and new disciplines.

The military was also expected to give up their share of the peace dividend caused by the end of the Cold War. Plans were in place to cut the active military force from ten to eight divisions just before 9/11. These cuts were hastily ditched, of course, but the transformation of the Army's forces from divisional sized units to modular brigade sized units stayed on track despite war efforts and effects. By this time in U.S. history, senior military advisers to policy-makers had for the most part had their first war experiences in Vietnam. Most knew both the bitter taste of defeat at young ages and the warm glow of victory from the Gulf War in 1991. Because of this, senior U.S. military leaders who remained in uniform were seasoned professionals.

The Road to the Global War on Terror

The *9/11 Commission Report* was a report to the American people and the world at large explaining how the catastrophic events of 11 September 2001, came to pass.⁵¹ After making the explanation, the report amassed expert opinions as to what improvements could be made to the U.S. government to prevent such a surprise in the future. In addition to the 9/11 Report, many books have been published about the rise of Islamic violent extreme organizations, such as Al Qaeda, in an attempt to understand the clash of civilizations which occurred during this period and led to the catastrophic events of 11 September 2001.

The origins of the current conflict between violent extremist organizations, such as al Qaeda, and the West can be found either long ago with the splitting of the twelve tribes of Israel, the rise of Islam in the Eight Century, or from more recent events such as the Islamic Revolution in Iran or from the birth of the nation-state of Israel. The U.S. had been fighting the symptoms for many years, and it was not until 9/11 that systematic operational plans were developed with objectives to counter these threats to U.S. interest. The first operation was Operation Noble Eagle, calling up 50,000 military reservists to augment domestic security effective 14 September 2001. The next operation was Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in October 2001, with the strategic objective of pursuing al Qaeda and Usama bin Ladin (UBL) as well as the unrecognized government of Afghanistan named the Taliban who gave al Qaeda and UBL safe haven in that repressively ruled country. In April 2003, the third major operation was Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), to affect a regime change in Iraq and eliminate future support to violent extremism in this area of the Middle East.

⁵¹Appendix B gives key events during this period and highlights decisions during the road to conflict.

Senior Policy-makers Decisions and Use of Intelligence During 1998--2003

During his term of office, President Clinton faced foreign policy and military decisions about what to do in response to the African Embassy and *Cole* terrorist bombings and to the growing threat revealed by CIA's counterterrorism cell (CTC) focusing on al-Qaeda and Bin Ladin. He apparently listened to national security advisors and signed five separate Memoranda of Notifications, authorizing covert action to attempt to destroy bin Laden and his network, and to disrupt and pre-empt their terrorist operations. The Memoranda resulted in air and cruise missile strikes against empty training camps in the sands of Afghanistan. No authority was granted to kill out right or assassinate bin Laden.⁵² One has to wonder why, in retrospect; President Clinton decided not to create more of an alarm concerning the growing security threat to the U.S. and the West, particularly since he was not a candidate for election having already served two terms. Was this a by-product of the Lewinsky affair? Raising the issue of a foreign terrorism threat would surely have been perceived as a thinly disguised ploy to divert attention from the Lewinsky scandal. Given the U.S. cultural context described earlier, would anyone have acted differently? Given the Lewinsky affair, probably not. Even so, President Clinton seemed to follow President Kennedy's formula for accepting responsibility for errors (for example,. Bay of Pigs) and watching his ratings rise.⁵³

President Clinton was probably more focused on the domestic trouble caused by the Lewinsky scandal and resulting impeachment from his perjury on the matter. The CIA had covert relationships in Afghanistan authorized first in 1998 by President Clinton and affirmed later by President Bush.⁵⁴ The bulk of the strategic decisions regarding war fell to President Bush, who

⁵²Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 34.

⁵³Graubard, 335.

⁵⁴Woodward, 40.

was somewhat uniquely qualified for this role from having observed his father's role as Commander in Chief for a Middle East conflict during Operation Desert Storm.

How did President Clinton make strategic decisions? As self-reported in a recent speech to Kansas University students, President Clinton claimed to look at world problems from a global prospective. He claimed to ask himself the following five questions, implying that answers were his alone to find and command.

1. What is the fundamental nature of the world? He reminded himself of the globalization and interconnectedness of the world in answering this question.

2. Is the interconnectedness working? (for example: AIDS, poverty, and others)

3. How should we change this world? Should interconnectedness change to integration and therefore achieve a global community of shared belonging? (socialism)?

4. How would you do it? We must have a security policy but the military can not be the only solution. We need a Diplomatic strategy and a strategy to build partners.

5. Who is supposed to do all this? He posited that we all are. Government, the military and multinational coalitions must do some but are limited by laws on what they can do. Thus, citizens must also, and can also, do something. This part must be answered first then turn to local, state, national, and the international community systems for actions.⁵⁵

President Bush had his own style of making decisions. During the 9/11 crisis, Bob Woodward reported that President Bush was concerned about appearing decisive without being rash. He forced himself to listen to his small experienced group of national security advisers: Vice President Richard Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice. By conservative count, the team together had close to 100 years of full-time experience dealing with the national security. As of 11 September 2001, the President had not even one year of such experience. When this group

gave advice, the President trusted their judgment.⁵⁶ President Bush also trusted his DCI, George Tenet and allowed the personality strong director to participate in policy and operational decisions in the aftermath of 9/11. There are noted parallels between President George W. Bush and President Reagan's administrations and political actions according to a study of U.S. Presidents by Stephen Graubard.⁵⁷

One key decision in keeping with the President Reagan theme was the decision to treat 9/11 as a military versus a policy or criminal action as European allies did. Good political sense and following President Reagan's ability to keep friendly with the military may have been guiding factors. Above all, President Bush had a hurt and shocked nation to lead. The nation sought a balm through action for its wounds, sooner than later, and President Bush spoke the correct words to put a bewildered nation into action to focus on its enemies.

The Intelligence Lessons

The nation looked for action and answers from its government. All of Washington, DC, was on the "hot seat" for these answers and courses of action. Sadly, not everyone on the Bush team was united in following the CIA's counterterrorism center's reports on Usama bin Ladin, Saddam Hussein, and the al Qaeda terrorist network. A very unfortunate result of not trusting and respecting the intelligence process apparently happened when senior policy-makers were given information created by members of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy during 2001 to 2003. A public censure was issued by the House Armed Service Committee on 7 February 2007, citing a recent Inspector General report stating that:

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy "developed, produced, and disseminated alternative intelligence assessments on the Iraq and al-Qaeda relationship...While such actions were not illegal or unauthorized, the actions were, in our opinion, inappropriate. The DOD Inspector General's review of the pre-Iraqi war

⁵⁵ Recorded by SAMS Student Beth Medina at Kansas University during speech by President Clinton to KU Students in early 2007.

⁵⁶ Woodward, 74.

⁵⁷ Graubard, 31.

activities of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy uncovered practices that are absolutely indefensible. ... it clearly shows that Doug Feith and others in that office exercised extremely poor judgment for which our nation and our service members in particular, are paying a terrible price. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy should not be in the business of conducting independent intelligence assessments. Responsibility for intelligence assessments should be left to the professionals--the brave and patriotic men and women of the U.S. Intelligence Community. Congress must ensure that the Director of National Intelligence and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence have put procedures in place that will eliminate the possibility of incidents like this from occurring in the future.”⁵⁸

There was not much fanfare attached to this discovery and announcement, but it is a clear indication of “politicization” of intelligence reports. In this case, Under Secretary Feith issued alternative intelligence assessment reports, something not seen in the prelude to the Vietnam War and hopefully never to be seen again.

The surprise of the 9/11 event has rightly been compared to that of 7 December 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor during World War II. Both shocking events highlighted intelligence failures, had high casualties, and led to significant changes to the U.S. intelligence system. Pearl Harbor led to the *National Security Act of 1947*, and 9/11 led to the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004*. Chapter 13 of the *9/11 Commission Report* addressed six specific problems with U.S. Intelligence systems which failed to give proper warning of the 9/11 attacks. The second section of this chapter listed four recommendations for changes to the intelligence community that would fix these problems. The report justified the recommended changes by citing the demise of the Cold War as well as correction of the six problems with the existing intelligence system. The six problems outlined in the 9/11 Report are summarized and discussed in the following paragraphs.

“Structural barriers to performing joint intelligence work” was the first issue listed in the report. This problem was the lack of sharing between national intelligence agencies and the intelligence sections of domestic law enforcement agencies. There were obstacles to sharing what

⁵⁸U.S. House of Representatives, House Armed Services Committee, *Skelton: DoD Office's Activities Absolutely Indefensible*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 9 February 2007), 1.

the CIA knew, vice what the FBI knew, vice what perhaps another intelligence service knew. It was not possible to see all pieces of information in one place and be able to put together a coherent intelligence picture, especially between foreign and domestic looking entities. The *9/11 Commission Report* likened the need to remove the structural barriers to the success created by the Goldwater-Nichols Act which eliminated the barriers between the military service's intelligence sections and consolidated them into the DIA, requiring officers to serve in a joint billet to improve understanding and create a collective mind-set. Although the Act had been passed much earlier, these changes took effect in 1995 and required a few more years to work out all the difficulties. The law forced military intelligence operations to become integrated. Likewise, national and domestic intelligence operations needed the same improvement. In essence, information was compartmented and by law not able to be shared by all who needed it.

“Lack of common standards and practices across the foreign-domestic divide” was the next problem listed. When polling across the intelligence agencies, the investigators and authors of the report were struck by the variance in quality concerning the collection, processing, reporting, sharing, and analyzing of intelligence work. There was no common standard of quality and no common set of personnel standards for intelligence professionals operating across the national intelligence spectrum of the many intelligence agencies. It was particularly obvious in the domestic versus the international looking agencies. In practical terms, what this issue meant was that assignment of personnel without thought, vetting, and training to intelligence sections of agencies needed to be standardized across the domestic and national agencies. Implicit in this issue was the call for one Director of Intelligence to standardize the entire community.

“Divided management of national intelligence capabilities” was the third observation raised by the *9/11 Commission Report* concerning intelligence. This was the problem of having three of the technology oriented intelligence agencies, the National Security Agency (NSA), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA, formerly NIMA), and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), reside under the Department of Defense (DoD). Although housing

the three under the DoD was very good for the war-fighting combatant commands and a consequence of the 1991 Gulf War, the DCI was left less able to influence how these technical resources were allocated and used. This issue defeated the ability of the DCI to fulfill his community management role because the DCI had no central authority such as budgetary control over all the intelligence agencies. Sadly, the 9/11 report actually became a political instrument by being an advocate for the implementation of a Director of National Intelligence. It was written, after all, by politicians.

“Weak capacity to set priorities and move resources” was the fourth issue raised by the report. The various intelligence agencies were organized around what they collected and the ways they collected it. Except for the DCI, there was no national authority to dictate intelligence priorities to the agencies. Although the DCI had the responsibility to make the priorities about moving resources to support the national intelligence effort, in reality the DCI did not have the matching power to reach across agencies and make the reallocation effort through budgetary power. Defense department budgets were created by the annual Defense Appropriation bills and the DCI had only a cursory review of the intelligence functions therein. Cooperation between intelligence agencies was situational, piece-meal and ad hoc before 9/11. Sharing and cooperation did happen in some disciplines, but never in an overarching fashion to focus intelligence in a unified manner on national priorities. It was rarer to see sharing and cooperation in an open manner with domestic agencies such as the FBI. Laws at the time did not permit it. The Patriot Act made an attempt to patch this gap. Again, this issue was again a call for a National Intelligence Director with authority to set priorities and enforce them with resources via budgetary powers.

“Too many jobs for the DCI” was the oldest and fifth problem addressed. The three responsibilities of the DCI prior to the 2004 IRTPA were, (1) to lead the CIA, (2) to manage the loose confederation of agencies comprising the intelligence community, and (3) to be the principal intelligence adviser to the President. It was true that no DCI was able to perform all

three functions well. The community management job was the one that generally suffered, particularly because of the lack of budgetary authority discussed in the last paragraphs.

“Too complex and secret” was the final issue brought to light by the *9/11 Commission Report*. Here, the report succinctly stated: “Over the decades, the agencies and the rules surrounding the intelligence community have accumulated to a depth that practically defies public comprehension.” Although not elaborated, prior to 9/11, information was over-classified and not able to be seen at the lowest level due to weak and non-unified standards of practice. This led to the inability to share not only between agencies but between coalition partners. Another variation of this complaint was the lack of access to compartmented information.

The *9/11 Commission Report* then turned to remedies for the six issues above. The creation of a National Intelligence Director who would take on two of the three duties of the former DCI, to (1) to become the single focal point of national and strategic intelligence for policy-makers and the President, and (2) to manage the national intelligence program and oversee the agencies that contribute to it. This second duty was the community management function previously assigned to the DCI position by President Kennedy by a Presidential memorandum. This recommendation addressed **all** of the problems listed above. It also gave two of the three jobs assigned to previous DCI’s to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

The remaining job of leading the CIA retained the title of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). George Tenet was the last DCI to have been burdened with all three roles. Future DCI’s were charged with the sole role of running the CIA. The second recommendation charged future CIA directors with six specific ways to improve CIA’s organization in analytical, operational, personnel practices, and integration of human and technical disciplines.

The third recommendation listed by the *9/11 Commission Report* was similar to frustrations with strategic intelligence experienced by President Kennedy early in his

administration as discussed in Chapter One.⁵⁹ The third recommendation in the *9/11 Commission Report* specifically stated that lead responsibility for directing and executing paramilitary operations, whether clandestine or covert, should shift to the Defense Department. There it would be consolidated with the capabilities for training, direction, and execution of such operations already being developed in the Special Operations Command. This recommendation was not implemented but ordered by Presidential memorandum to be taken under study by the CIA and DoD and not yet available to the public.

The final recommendation addressed a way to combat the secret and complexity problem described in the sixth problem listed in the report. The authors of the report recommended that the amount of money being apportioned for national intelligence and its components no longer be kept secret. The report recommended that Congress pass a separate appropriations act for intelligence, defending the broad allocation of how these tens of billions of dollars have been assigned among the varieties of intelligence work.

The final DCI, George Tenet, gave a retirement speech on 14 July 2004, to members of the Defense Intelligence Agency reflecting on his nine years of service to the CIA. There were several insights he shared with his audience. He stated that no Secretary of Defense cared about intelligence quite the way Secretary Rumsfeld did as evidenced by his budgetary and other support to the intelligence community. He also remarked how at the beginning of his term, General Norman Schwarzkopf, head of Central Command during Operation Desert Storm was not at all happy with the lack of integration between the strategic and tactical levels of intelligence, and both men and their organizations worked to fix the problem. Tenet felt there was a fundamental difference in 2004 intelligence operations from that which occurred

⁵⁹In 1961, President Kennedy became truly disillusioned and impatient with the lack of progress of CIA operations against North Vietnam. He issued National Security Action Memoranda moving most paramilitary operations from the CIA to the Defense Department which became Operation Switchback and eventually OPLAN 34A. Refer to Appendix A.

during Desert Storm in 1990 to 1991. He stated: “The future of this business is the seamless flow of data, for example what is happening in fusion centers.” The last community directive that Tenet issued concerned information sharing in accordance with findings of the *9/11 Commission Report*. Remarkably, Tenet stated the following: “The biggest lesson of 9/11 . . . is that all of that data never existed in one place. So the paradigm of the future *must* be that all analysts will have access to *all* of the data.” He closed his farewell speech with a poem he wrote which he hoped would inspire analysts and intelligence professionals to be venturesome and to take appropriate risks for the good of the entire intelligence community even if it was something outside the mainstream of their frames of reference at work. He charged analysts to pay attention to past lessons and never get “locked into” a stance which he claimed was easy to do when an analyst followed a subject for many years. He asked them not to be rigid, to use red cells which had been in use in the CIA for a number of years, to be a devil’s advocate at times, and to take risks.

Combining the lesson articulated by Tenet with those of the 9/11 Report and the Skelton report concerning Undersecretary Douglas Feith, a summary of the intelligence lessons discussed in this chapter as they relate to the failure to predict the 9/11 event are summarized in the table found in Appendix G. Similar to Chapter One, a check marks where the responsibility falls primarily to the Intelligence professional (I) or the Policy-maker (P).

CHAPTER THREE, CONCLUSION

Few wars were started with deliberate intention. Most of them arose from neglecting the lessons of history, from underestimating the risks, and from carelessly crossing the border of the point of no return. Eventually . . . events develop a dynamism of their own and . . . they can no longer be controlled.⁶⁰

Franz Josef Strauss

The RAND Corporation wrote a very interesting study in 1969, predicting that a huge amount of literature would be written about Vietnam in the coming years. The cautions listed in this report are particularly germane to this monograph.

First, we have the corruption of Santayana's prescription: those who profess awareness of history's lessons may be precisely those who will repeat the error or make new ones. As Albert Wohlstetter has remarked, 'of all the disasters in Vietnam, the worst may be the 'lessons' we'll draw from it.' Experience may be the worst rather than the best teacher, for the lessons supposedly derived from Vietnam may lead to new debacles, depending on who draws the lessons and how they are applied.

Secondly, there is always the possibility of finding lessons where none exist. Here, those who neglect history may actually have the advantage over those who submerge themselves in it. These two problems--mislessons and nonlessons--should forewarn against speaking too assertively about 'lessons learned' in Vietnam.⁶¹

If any one conclusion emerges from this glance at the possible lessons of Vietnam, it is that learning them may be a good thing in some cases, unlearning what already poses as lessons better still in others, and denying that there really are any [is] perhaps the best – because [it is] the safest thing of all.⁶²

In this context, this final chapter discusses the observations concerning strategic intelligence of both periods of time.

The prelude of the escalation of the Vietnam War to mid-1965 was marked by an unfortunate series of events that led to the mistrust, disregard, and at times politicization of intelligence. Some intelligence products during the period were flawed because they were based on false, un-vetted, and overly optimistic products from the field. This in turn contributed to the

⁶⁰Davidson, 333.

⁶¹Melvin Gurtov and Konrad Kellen, *Vietnam: Lessons and Mislessons* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1969), 2.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 22,

lack of trust decision makers developed toward intelligence products. Yet, for all the problems and growing pains of the intelligence agencies and systems, enduring lessons for the intelligence professional became apparent. As outlined in Chapter One, five enduring intelligence challenges are still pertinent today and are seen again in Chapter Two.⁶³

The intelligence community did respond and evolve to address the intelligence failures from Vietnam. The U.S. Army in particular, instituted an All Source Production Section, evolving further into the All Source Control Element, specifically to fuse the various intelligence disciplines of Signals, Imagery, and Human intelligences. The CIA matured its process to generate the PDB into almost an art form of communication, striving hard to avoid easy politicization of the reports. In general, post-Vietnam reporting did improve as to quality and timeliness thanks in part to evolving communications technologies.

The prelude to the events of 9/11 and subsequent declaration by the U.S. for a Global War on Terror encountered a very different set of intelligence observations. The call for local access and fusion of intelligence that was seemingly apparent from the Vietnam years went unheeded. The major intelligence failures and the context in which they happened were quite different from those of the prelude to the Vietnam War. The primary issue consisted of the lack of a DNI who would have the power to solve all of the problems listed in the *9/11 Commission Report*. The compartmentalization issue in the pre-9/11 period was two-fold. First, and most damaging, was the division between foreign and domestic intelligence, created by law. Secondly, there was the same inter-disciplinary intelligence compartmentalization as identified in the pre-Vietnam studies but now between intelligence agencies.

The main effort to fix intelligence problems of the pre-9/11 period rested on the establishment of the DNI in an Office of National Intelligence. In the discussion below of the first

⁶³The third summary table in Appendix G places the issues of both time periods side-by-side to summarize and highlight the conclusions discussed herein.

two DNI's, Ambassador John Negroponte and Admiral Mitchell McConnell, there are insertions of all six of the problems identified and discussed in Chapter Two from the *9/11 Commission Report*.

The first DNI, Ambassador Negroponte, had a very large task presented to him when assigned to the job on 21 April 2005. Several months later in a speech to the Joint Military Intelligence College on 20 September 2005, he was asked how he was going to tackle the job of implementing 70 of the 74 reforms outlined in the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* consisting of 270 pages. Ambassador Negroponte responded that he would appoint several key deputies and build a staff which would focus on the top priorities (divided management of national intelligence capabilities). From his point of view, the top three priorities were; (1) the quality of analysis concerning intelligence [the quality issue of lack of common standards] which would include the combining of domestic and foreign analyses (the compartmentalization issue), (2) the need to build a sense of community for the intelligence community breaking down the stove pipes and walls which prevented the sharing of information (too complex and secret, and compartmentalization again), and (3) a budget that would unify and set the priorities of the many intelligence agencies (weak capacity to set priorities and move resources). Ambassador Negroponte accomplished his mission and left a legacy upon which to build efficiencies in intelligence not seen in the U.S. since prior to these two periods of study. He was truly the perfect diplomatic choice to bring the disparate intelligence agencies together, working collectively toward strategic, operational, and tactical objectives. His greatest success was the use of his language and diplomatic skills to build a sense of community.

The second DNI, Admiral McConnell, was sworn in on 20 March 2007. He began his career as an ensign in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam almost forty years prior to this appointment. Thus, it was not surprising to hear Vietnam era words reflected in his acceptance speech to President Bush and the intelligence community on this date. He stated that “it was required that we have the “best and brightest” of our citizens in our intelligence ranks (the quality issue of lack

of common standards) to fight a very different enemy.” He noted that the particular enemy faced by this generation of intelligence officers required the merging of foreign and domestic intelligence, (the compartmentalization issue) something not heretofore done in the intelligence arena.

There were similar issues from one era to the next. Both periods pointed out the need for fused intelligence, using the exact wording of “fused.” Both periods also recommended the avoidance of politicization of intelligence and the elimination of excess compartmentalization of intelligence, as well as the need for trust and confidence of policy-makers in the intelligence process. Actors in both periods complained about the quality and timeliness of intelligence but in vastly different contexts. Vietnam intelligence reporting was un-vetted and rosied up during its journey up the channels to policy-makers. Pre-9/11 complaints about quality concerned the disparity of education and training of intelligence professionals across the intelligence community and lack of common standards.

In the 1960’s, compartmentalization was an issue between disciplines such as Signals, Human and Imagery intelligences. The problem was partially solved by the Goldwater-Nichols Act and subsequent reorganizations of defense intelligence after the Vietnam War. The compartmentalization observation from the 9/11 Report was that the FBI and other domestic agencies did not have routine access to foreign focused intelligence channels and reporting and vice versus. This was a very different issue requiring the enactment of a very different set of laws to bridge the foreign and domestic divides in intelligence. Although the three jobs for the DCI was an issue in both periods, it did not become a causative factor for intelligence errors until the pre-9/11 period. The other disparities can most likely be attributed to the youth of the intelligence community in the early 1960’s versus the mature organization it became prior to 9/11. Finally, the level of trust and confidence in intelligence reporting was much higher in the pre-9/11 period than the pre-Vietnam period. The Douglas Feith issue was a serious departure from the norm. In contrast to the JFK years, intelligence was well received and believed by pre-9/11 policy-makers.

The cultural context of the two periods, the styles of decision making, the composition of the senior policy-makers, and their human foibles were all very different. Thus, lessons which were the same and emerged from both periods could appear to be universal and pertinent to strategic intelligence regardless of the age but not regardless of context. Such intelligence points should be further tested against past and future conflicts and perhaps would stand the test of time.

To conclude, a challenge lies ahead for the intelligence community to understand and apply, or disregard, lessons from throughout history using the proper historical and environmental contexts. After 9/11, there was a surge of young college graduates seeking to join the ranks of the intelligence community, not seen since after World War II. Before his departure, Tenet often remarked publicly that 138,000 applicants applied for 2,200 jobs in 2003. The mean age *and experience* of the intelligence analyst and professional seriously dropped as a generation of Cold War warriors retired. Thus, a codification of lessons and understanding them *in situ* are ever more important so as to not relearn painful lessons of the past. The goal of having the wisdom to avoid intelligence pitfalls must be embraced by the contemporary analyst seeking to get their products to the policy-maker. For future and junior members of the intelligence analytical community, a suggested required course could be entitled: "Intelligence pitfalls throughout history."

Lastly, the burden to use intelligence properly is not for the intelligence professional alone. The policy-maker must also be witting to the enduring challenge to avoid using intelligence for political ends (politicization) and must strive to maintain trust and confidence in the intelligence products and processes. The policy-maker can urge success for the intelligence community by encouraging: (1) the elimination of compartmentalization issues and establishment of sharing as a norm, (2) the increase the basic timeliness and quality of intelligence, and (3) the maintenance of all available intelligence in one place such as fusion centers. These actions, in addition to the education of intelligence analysts to the pitfalls of history are a formula to succeed in the future.

APPENDIX A

Key Persons, 1960--1965

Presidents, 1960--1965	
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1/20/53—1/20/61
John F. Kennedy	1/20/61—11/22/63
Lyndon B. Johnson	11/22/63—1/20/69

Directors of Central Intelligence, 1960—1965	
Allen W. Dulles	2/26/53—11/29/61
John McCone	11/29/61—4/28/65
VADM William Raborn, USN (Ret)	4/28/65--6/30/66

Secretary of State, 1960--1965	
Christian A Herter	1959--1961
Dean D. Rusk	1961--1969

National Security Advisor, 1960--1965	
McGeorge Bundy	1961--1966

Ambassadors to Vietnam, 1960--1965	
Elbridge Durbrow, Career FSO	3/14/57--5/3/61
Frederick E. Nolting, Jr., Career FSO	5/15/61--8/15/63
Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Political appointee	8/1/63--6/28/64
Maxwell D. Taylor, Political appointee	7/1/64--7/30/65
Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Political appointee	7/31/65--4/25/67

Secretary of Defense, 1960--1965	
Thomas S. Gates	12/2/59--1/20/61
Robert S. McNamara	1/20/61--2/29/68

Chairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1960--1965	
GEN Lyman Lemnitzer, USA	1960--1962
GEN Maxwell Taylor, USA	1962--1964
GEN Earle Wheeler, USA	1964--1970

Army Chiefs of Staff, 1960--1965	
GEN Lyman Lemnitzer, USA	1959--1960
GEN George Decker, USA	1960--1962
GEN Earle Wheeler, USA	1962--1964
GEN Harold K. Johnson, USA	1964--1968

Chief of Station (COS), Saigon, Vietnam, 1960—1965	
William E. Colby	1959--1962
John Richardson	1962--1963
Peer DeSilva	12/7/63--65

MACV CDR's, 1960--1965	
Gen Paul Harkins	2/62--5/64
Gen William Westmoreland	6/64--1968

SOG CDR's, 1964-1965	
Col Clyde Russell	1/64--5/65
COL Don Blackburn	5/65--5/66

Key Events, Until Mid-1965

Key Events, 1960--1965 and Road to War	
7/26/47	National Security Acts, establishing CIA and giving authorities for intelligence activities.
5/14/48	Prelude: Israel declared itself a sovereign state.
8/10/49	Amendments to the National Security Act, renaming military to DoD.
8/29/49	Prelude: USSR detonated its first atomic bomb in secret.
6/25/50	Prelude: N. Korea invades S. Korea and begins Korean War.
7/27/53	Prelude: End of the Korean War.
5/7/54	Prelude: French Defeat at Dien Bien Phu.
7/21/54	Prelude: Geneva Accords ending of French/Indochina I war at Geneva.
10/29/56- 11/6/56	Prelude: Israel invades Egypt's Sinai, British and French attempt to take the Suez Canal, UN swiftly brokers a cease-fire which was respected.
11/1-5/56	Prelude: Failed Hungarian uprising, Soviets take over their government.
10/4/57	Prelude: Soviets launch of Sputnik, orbits earth.
2/1/58	Prelude: U.S. launch of Explorer I, orbits earth.
7/15/58	Prelude: U.S. military intervention in Lebanon, and Brits to Jordan to counter soviet expansion and defend small country's independence.
9/15/58	In response to the Defense Reorganization Act, the U.S. Intelligence Board (USIB) was created.
1958	Prelude: Joint CIA-President Diem (So Vietnam) agreement to conduct agent operations against Hanoi, (zero results).
1/1/59	Prelude: Castro seized power in Cuba.
5/59	Prelude: No. Vietnam approved resolution 15. That same month, the party's leaders ordered the establishment of a secret military communication line to provide goods for the revolution in the south. The first infiltration down what became known as the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" began in June [1959] and reached the south in late August. By midsummer of 1959, the party notified cadres in the central Highlands that it had given "the green light for switching from a political struggle [a] political struggle combined with [an] armed struggle." Hanoi had made this decision in part to save lives and thin resources but also to comply with the wishes of both the Soviet Union and China to avoid a widened [nuclear] war. ⁶⁴
1/60	When a guerrilla force estimated at several hundred men overran a Vietnamese army regimental headquarters in Tay Ninh Province in January 1960, it was evident that the South Vietnam was on the verge of another people's war. ⁶⁵
5/1/60	Soviets shot down U-2 plane and F.G. Powers for invading their air space while collecting intelligence.
5/13/60	U.S. increased aid to South Vietnam.
9/60	North Vietnam publicly announced its support of the insurgency in the south. ⁶⁶

⁶⁴Jones, 16.

⁶⁵Allen, 111.

⁶⁶Davidson, 289.

11/60	A military coup failed only at the last minute to oust So. Vietnam President Diem. Its close brush with success highlighted the popular dissatisfaction with the Saigon regime. ⁶⁷
1/6/61	Khrushchev delivered a fiery speech aimed at the Chinese communists but interpreted by Kennedy as a challenge to the U.S. ⁶⁸ Khrushchev stated that the USSR supported wars of national liberation because they were the result of Western imperialism and colonialism; compatible with USSR policy of peaceful coexistence.
1/61	For almost two weeks in early January 1961, U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Edward Lansdale secretly conducted a firsthand expect inspection of South Vietnam at the request of the outgoing Secretary of Defense.[Gates] ⁶⁹ Edward Lansdale, CIA's roving expert on both covert operations and counterinsurgency, finished a fact finding trip and returned to brief the NSC. Kennedy later told his advisers that "for the first time [it] gave him a sense of the danger and urgency of the problem in Vietnam." ⁷⁰
1/17/61	In Congo, President Patrice Lumumba is assassinated, CIA attempt to do so in vain.
1/17/61	In Cuba, Bay of Pigs invasion.
1/20/61	Inauguration of President John F Kennedy.
1/28/61	First JFK Nat'l Security Council meeting w/ Ed Lansdale report on Vietnam. Briefed by Ed Lansdale regarding memorandum of recent visit to Vietnam. "For the first time it gave him [JFK] a sense of danger and urgency of the problem in Vietnam" General Lansdale implored the new administration to "recognize that Vietnam is in a critical condition and should treat it as a combat area of the Cold War, as an area requiring emergency treatment." ⁷¹
2/6/61	So. Vietnam President Diem announced at a press conference a series of reforms and urged popular participation in the struggle against the Viet Cong. [this was a contingent for continued U.S. support.] ⁷²
3/61	Amb. Durbrow came away with a mixed response after an hour-long attempt to convince Diem to accept the Kennedy administration's Counterinsurgency Plan. ⁷³
3/9/61	NSAM #28 JFK asks (orders) both CIA and DoD to present "views on what actions might be undertaken in the near future and what steps might be taken to expand operations in the longer future." And orders CIA to make every possible effort to launch guerrilla operations in North Vietnamese territory. ⁷⁴
4/12/61	Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin is the first human to orbit the earth.

⁶⁷Jones, 12.

⁶⁸Ibid., 14.

⁶⁹Ibid., 12.

⁷⁰Conboy and Andradé, 34.

⁷¹Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 1, 22.

⁷²Jones, 30.

⁷³Ibid., 35.

⁷⁴Conboy and Andradé, 35.

4/19/61	Bay of Pigs, a CIA-sponsored paramilitary operation by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs went terribly wrong. Followed immediately by a series of reversals for the American-backed Royal Lao army, after a No Vietnam led communist land grab. ⁷⁵
4/20/61	JFK appoints Joint Task Force to study Vietnam. At a cabinet meeting, President Kennedy asked McNamara to appoint the deputy SecDef Roswell Gilpatric, as head of a group that included Lansdale, Rostow, Sorensen, Alexis Johnson from the State Department, and Desmond Fitzgerald from the CIA. Gilpatric later explained that his appointment as chair of the new task force and reflected the president's lack of confidence in the state department because of his dissatisfaction regarding Laos. The president was also unhappy with the lack of leadership shown by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who at one point had given him five different recommendations for what to do. McNamara informed the president the Gilpatric would have a plan of action by the 28th. To monitor progress, Robert Kennedy served as the president's liaison with the committee, attending nearly every meeting and reporting directly to his brother. ⁷⁶ (Jones. 2003) The issue--the commitment of the U.S. combat troops to Vietnam--came up for the first time. ⁷⁷
4/27/61	A meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) members and others exposed the deep divisions among Washington's leaders over whether or not become militarily involved in Laos and, by extrapolation, in Vietnam. Indeed, State Department advisor Alexis Johnson considered the meeting "the turning point on Laos," and Rostow called it "the worst White House meeting he had ever intended in the entire Kennedy administration." ⁷⁸
4/61	"if we're given the right to use nuclear weapons, we can guarantee victory." General Lyman Lemnitzer, Chair of Joint Chiefs Of Staff. ⁷⁹
4/28/61	COS William Colby to DC to help make the pitch for increased covert ops. ⁸⁰
4/29/61	NSC receives "the "program of action" submitted by the state department's Gilpatric task force to the president. The report termed the Vietnamese situation as" critical but not hopeless" and initially adhered to Kennedy's preference for counterinsurgency. The report also express concern that the fourteen-nation conference on Laos scheduled to open in Geneva on 15 May might result in a communist effort to impose a freeze on the number of military forces brought into Southeast Asia. ⁸¹
5/5/61	Khrushchev considered Laotian neutrality preferable to a Chinese brand of communism, and Ho Chi Minh knew that the injection of U.S. troops would prolong the reunification of Vietnam. The president's strategy worked. Harriman secured a U.N. supervised ceasefire in Laos. ⁸²

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Jones, 40.

⁷⁷Davidson, 292.

⁷⁸Ibid., 43.

⁷⁹Ibid., 49.

⁸⁰Conboy and Andradé, 34.

⁸¹Jones, 50.

⁸²Ibid., 58.

5/4/61	Executive order established the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board as a successor to the 2/6/56 Board of Consultants in Foreign Intelligence Activities.
5/10/61	U.S. forces should be deployed immediately to So. Vietnam." Statement by Joint Chiefs of Staff. ⁸³
5/12/61	Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson saw Diem in Saigon. Johnson asked Diem if he would accept U.S. combat troops. Diem told Johnson that he wanted the U.S. combat forces <i>only</i> in the event of an open invasion from the north, but did not otherwise. ⁸⁴
6/61	Berlin Crisis: JFK's tense two-day summit meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna, culminated in the premier's warning that if the U.S. did not leave Berlin by the end of that year, the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace with East Germany, forcing the west to negotiate with the East Germans for continued access to West Berlin. "If the West tries to intervene," Khrushchev assured Kennedy "there will be war." "Mr. Chairman," came the sharp response, "there will be a war. It is going to be a very cold winter." ⁸⁵
6/28/61	Kennedy approved three NSAM numbers 55, 56, 57--to redefine and transfer executive branch responsibility for executing unconventional warfare operations from the CIA to the Pentagon. ⁸⁶ NSAM 55, relations of the JSC to the President in Cold War Operations, handed paramilitary back to Pentagon. For the past decade the CIA, not the military had handled paramilitary ops. Follow on NSAM's of 56 and 57 supported this in details, putting CIA in a supporting role except for those ops that were "wholly covert or disavowable." ⁸⁷
7/6/61	Soviets signed a ten-year military aid pact with N. Korea.
7/8/61	Two men on motor bicycles threw a grenade that bounced off [Ambassador] Nolting's car without exploding [in Saigon]. ⁸⁸
7/25/61	Kennedy announced defense budget increase of over \$3 billion.
8/2/61	Public announcement of the creation of DIA.
8/13-17/61	Berlin Wall constructed, U.S., French, and British forces went on alert.
9/18/61	Nearly a thousand Viet Cong forces wielding rifles and machetes broke through the earth and barbed-wire barricades to seize the provincial capital of Phuoc Vinh, located less than 60 miles north of Saigon. Casualties numbered nearly 80 villagers, 42 of them dead. In the course of holding the area for about six hours, the Viet Cong confiscated 100 rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition before releasing 250 accused communists from the local jail. After staging a "people's trial" before distraught villagers, they beheaded the provincial chief and his assistant in the marketplace for committing "crimes against the people." No incident prior to Phuoc Vinh so graphically revealed the Diem regime's inability to protect its people. ⁸⁹

⁸³Ibid., 49.

⁸⁴Davidson, 292.

⁸⁵Jones, 70.

⁸⁶Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 19.

⁸⁷Conboy and Andradé, 84.

⁸⁸Jones, 75.

⁸⁹Ibid., 82.

10/1/61	Defense Intelligence Agency became operational and the Army's current intelligence function was integrated into D. I. A's Current Intelligence And Indications Center. ⁹⁰
10/12/61	The U.S. Air Force . . . dispatched the first contingent of the training squadron to a rundown, former French airstrip at Bien Hoa Air Base just above Saigon. ⁹¹
10/24/61	The Taylor mission arrived in Saigon on Oct 18, 1961. In a cable to the president were preliminary views of: (1) the political military situation in South Vietnam was critical; and (2) ARVN military operations against the Viet Cong were ineffective because of lack of intelligence and unclear and unresponsive channels of command. In addition, <i>he</i> raised the sticky issue of introducing U.S. ground combat troops. ⁹²
10/27/61	U.S. and Soviet tanks confront each other in Berlin.
11/1/61	In a cable to the president . . . Taylor goes into additional detail regarding his concept for the use of the American forces...pointing out . . . the hazards of introducing U.S. troops. In this haunting and prophetic cable, Taylor set forth these disadvantages to the introduction of U.S. troops: (1) the U.S. strategic reserve will be further weakened for a period of unknown duration; (2) although U.S. prestige is already engaged in South Vietnam, it will become more so by the sending of troops; (3) if the first contingent is not enough to accomplish the necessary results, it will be difficult to resist the pressure to reinforce . . . there is no limit to our possible commitment; (4) the introduction of U.S. forces may risk escalation into a major war in Asia." Every one of these predictions came true. Regardless of these drawbacks, Taylor came down firmly on the side of introducing U.S. ground troops into South Vietnam. He cabled, "the introduction of the U.S. military Task Force without delay offers definitely more adventurous than it creates risks and difficulties. In fact, I do not believe that our program to save the South Vietnam will succeed without it." ⁹³
11/22/61	JFK approves an action plan authorizing 15,000 advisors for Vietnam. ⁹⁴
2/3/62	JFK bans all trade to Cuba except some food and medicine.
2/8/62	U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was established as a unifying subordinate command of CDR, CINCPAC. The first commander was General Paul Harkins, the choice of General Maxwell Taylor. Unfortunately both generals had zero counter-insurgency experience and were totally conventional force oriented. ⁹⁵

⁹⁰Allen, 130.

⁹¹Jones, 90.

⁹²Davidson, 295.

⁹³Ibid., 296.

⁹⁴Curtis Peebles, *Twilight Warriors: Covert Air Operations Against the USSR* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 263.

⁹⁵Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 23.

2/20/62	John Glenn becomes first U.S. astronaut to orbit earth.
2/62	February 1962, Under the Joint Chiefs established the office of the Special Assistant For Counter-Insurgency And Special Activities (SACSA). The first SACSA was USMC General Viktor H. "Brute" Krulak. ⁹⁶
3/17/62	USSR defended communist efforts in Vietnam and called on the U.S. to withdraw military forces there.
5/15/62	Pres. DeGualle announces plans to make France an independent nuclear power.
7/2-3/62	End of war for Algerian Independence from France.
7/23/62	Negotiations in Geneva resulted in the "neutralization" of Laos. ⁹⁷
9/2/62	Soviets announced that they would arm and train the Cuban military.
9/62	Intelligence estimates were proved wrong on the critical question of whether the USSR was implanting nuclear weapons in Cuba. ⁹⁸
10/6/62	Geneva Declaration and Protocol on the Neutrality of Laos, suspend all "provocative acts." ⁹⁹
10/16/62-10/28/62	The Cuban missile crisis: The settlement of which JFK pledged not to use American might to overthrow Castro. The result was a "major act of sabotage every month." ¹⁰⁰
11/22/62	Lao AA battery shot down an Air America C-123 with HA, two U.S. KIA. ¹⁰¹
12/31/62	Ho Chi Minh promises to wage guerrilla war for 10 years if necessary.
1/2/63	A 3 battalion So. Vietnamese army pincer attack against a badly outnumbered Viet Cong unit near the southern village of Ap Bac went awry. ARPN smashed a company of armored personnel carriers, and five American helicopters. 80 So. Vietnamese troops and three American advisors were KIA. ¹⁰² At Ap Bac, South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) units, supported by U.S. helicopters, had failed to destroy a far smaller Viet Cong force in the ARVN's first pitched battle. ¹⁰³
1/11/63	CIA report "Status On The War In South Vietnam" said the tide was not turned, the VC continued to expand the size and effectiveness of their forces and are increasingly bold in their attacks." The current situation was a stalemate, but presented a picture of an escalating VC challenge that the government of Vietnam was having a difficult time fending off. ¹⁰⁴
2/11/63	Mike Forrestal told Kennedy to expect a costly and long war. He challenged the MACV statistics on VC casualties were being used to assert that the U.S. side was winning. ¹⁰⁵
4/11/63	U.S. troops in So Vietnam number approximately 12,000.

⁹⁶Ibid., 22.

⁹⁷Ibid., 25.

⁹⁸Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 82.

⁹⁹Conboy and Andradé, 57.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 59.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 57.

¹⁰²Ibid., 58.

¹⁰³Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 3-4.

¹⁰⁴Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 33.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 33.

4/17/63	National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 53-63, 'Prospects for Vietnam', declared that "communist progress has been blunted and the situation is improving." Because of the original draft of the NIE was pessimistic, CIA director John McCone "remanded the estimate sending it back to the drawing board." It came back optimistic. ¹⁰⁶
6/11/63	Buddhist 'demonstration' in So Vietnam, with monk Thich Quang Duc self-immolation. Receives wide press coverage.
6/17/63	PACOM Draft for major expansion of covert action OPLAN and 34A submitted to the JCS. ¹⁰⁷
7/17/63-7/18/63	Buddhists demonstrators clash with Saigon police.
9/2/63	JFK announces policy and personnel changes needed in So Vietnam government.
9/9/63	JSC approves CINCPAC's paramilitary OPLAN 34-63, with full implementation by year's end after the Honolulu conference. ¹⁰⁸ OPLAN 34 approved by JCS. Delay from 17 June probable due to a) south Vietnam in crisis, b) no MACV paramilitary organization in place to carry out, c). Taylor did not believe covert action could accomplish much any did not see such operations as a job for soldiers. ¹⁰⁹
11/1/63	Coup d'etat in Vietnam, The coup led by ARVN generals (acquiesced in by the U.S. government through its ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge) unseated Diem on 1 November, and the next day a couple of junior officers murdered Diem and his brother. ¹¹⁰
11/15/63	A new OPLAN 34A-64 by the military and oplan Tiger by the CIA listed some 2,062 separate missions. ¹¹¹
11/20/63	CINCPAC meeting in Honolulu: SecDef McNamara, CDRCINCPAC ADM Felt, Sec St Rusk, Asst Ball, NSA Advisor McBundy, DCI McCone, Amb. Lodge and MACV Cdr Harkins. and CIA Colby, FE Div Chief. Subject: Handover of northern ops to DoD for OP SWITCHBACK. ¹¹² In the 7 months prior to Nov 63, 15 agent teams were inserted to N. Vietnam, most failed by capture or being turned. "It isn't working and it won't work any better with the military in charge", per CIA Station Chief William Colby at Honolulu conference. Instead CIA wanted psyop program. Main focus after DoD conversion would be escalating agent and commando ops per McNamara. ¹¹³
11/22/63	President Kennedy assassinated, Lyndon B. Johnson become U.S. President.
11/24/63	LBJ briefed on OPLAN 34-63, creates NSAM 273 to order MACV and CIA to jointly pen a 12- month graduated schedule of covert operations in the north. ¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 34.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁸Conboy and Andradé, 85.

¹⁰⁹Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 35.

¹¹⁰Davidson, 303.

¹¹¹Conboy and Andradé, 89.

¹¹²Ibid., 81.

¹¹³Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 89.

12/21/63	SecDef McNamara bleakly told President Johnson in a memo, “the situation is very disturbing. Current trends, unless reversed, in the next two - three months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely a Communist controlled state.” . . . “we should watch the situation very carefully, running scared, hoping for the best, and preparing for more forceful moves.” ¹¹⁵
12/21/63	LBJ approves OPLAN 34A. ¹¹⁶ Lyndon B. Johnson assigned an interdepartmental committee to study all planned 34A to “select from it those actions of a least risk.” Chair was MG Krulak. On 2 January 1964 selected the least risky operations for execution to begin 1 February 1964. Committee 303 approves the next day. ¹¹⁷
1/2/64	MG Brute Krulak’s interdepartmental committee analysis of OPLAN 34A-- “It is not compelling unless damage wrought was of great magnitude.” ¹¹⁸
1/64	Board of National Estimates also concludes ineffective (CIA, DoD, State) more bluntly put: would not convince Hanoi to change its policy. ¹¹⁹
1/19/64	Joint State, DoD, and CIA message implementing OPLAN 34A. ¹²⁰
1/20/64	The government of “BigMinh,” who succeeded the murdered Diem, was itself overthrown by a coup led by general Nguyen Khanh. ¹²¹
1/21/64	Amb Lodge presents sanitized version to military officials. This under Gen Duong Van Minh regime. ¹²²
1/24/64	SOG Special Operations Group, formed under MACV. First Cdr = Col Clyde R. Russell, USA. ¹²³ MACV headquarters in Saigon issued General Order 6, creating a highly secret new organization to execute these operations. It was euphemistically called MACV’s “Studies And Observation Group,” known as MACVSOG or simply SOG. ¹²⁴
1/30/64	A bloodless coup with Gen Nguyen Khanh in charge of So. Vietnam. ¹²⁵
2/3/64	Viet Cong attacked the American advisory compound at Kontum City. ¹²⁶
2/6/64	DCI McCone memo to Sec St Rusk: evidence of increased VC activities and victories. ¹²⁷
2/7/64	Viet Cong exploded a bomb in the Capital-Kinh Do theater, when it was known to be occupied only by Americans. 3 U.S. killed and 50 wounded. ¹²⁸

¹¹⁵Davidson, 303.

¹¹⁶Conboy and Andradé, 89.

¹¹⁷Shultz, *The Secret War Against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 39.

¹¹⁸Conboy and Andradé, 90.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Davidson, 313.

¹²²Conboy and Andradé, 91.

¹²³Ibid., 92.

¹²⁴Shultz, *The Secret War against Hanoi: The Untold Story of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*, 40.

¹²⁵Conboy and Andradé, 91.

¹²⁶Davidson, 313.

¹²⁷Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 52.

¹²⁸Davidson, 313.

2/9/64	DCI McCone memo to Sec Def McNamara: a Saigon Station appraisal that the So Vietnamese population at large “appears apathetic, without enthusiasm either for the GVN or VC sides but responsive to the latter because it fears the VC.” ¹²⁹
2/12/64	SNIE 50-64, “Short-Term Prospects in Southeast Asia,” which held that the question was whether South Vietnam and Laos “may be on the verge of collapse” and which judged that the South Vietnamese “have at best an even chance of withstanding the insurgency threat during the next few weeks or months.” ¹³⁰
2/14/64	NSC directive to establish a special Vietnam Task Force under direction of State Dept William H. Sullivan, Sullivan Task Force (STF) on 9 Feb until 1 Mar 64 to determine basic quest of whether the proposed U.S. attacks on the DRV would work: would those attacks cause the DRV to cease its support of the VC. Answer = no by 12 member drawn from State, Defense, the JS, USIA and CIA. Agrees with all Office of National Estimates put forth by CIA since at least 1961.” But contrary to all this, Rostow had told Rusk on 14 Feb (before conclusion of STF) that there was “a fair chance” that U.S. bombing of the DRV would work because, among other things, “Ho [Chin Minh] has an industrial complex to protect: he is no longer a guerrilla fighter with nothing to lose.” Citing FRUS, 1964-1968, vol I, 75, 76. ¹³¹
2/18/64	Special CIA mission to Saigon sent policymakers assessments which “instead of finding progress...reported a serious and steadily deteriorating situation.” ¹³²
2/18/64	CIA DD Plans, Richard Helms wrote to Sec Rusk that the tide of the insurgency in all four corps areas of Vietnam “appears to be going against the GVN.” ¹³³
2/20/64	CIA Far East Chief William Colby’s briefing for the White House began: “The Viet Cong have taken advantage of the power vacuum...in Saigon to score both military and psychological gains in the countryside”, and “the tide is running against the government in all areas of the country.” ¹³⁴
2/20/64	Pres Johnson that contingency planning for the putting pressure on No Vietnam should be “speeded up”, and that particular attention should be given to creating pressures that would “produce the maximum credible deterrent effect on Hanoi.” ¹³⁵
2/29/64	DCI McCone told Sec Def McNamara that the outlook in Vietnam was “very bad, and that unless the Khanh government demonstrated an ability for leadership of the nation, we could expect further and perhaps fatal deterioration.” ¹³⁶

¹²⁹Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 52.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 53.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 49-51.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 52.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 53.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 53.

Early 3/64	<p>“Sec McNamara, Gen Max Taylor, and DCI McCone 4 day trip to Saigon. McCone complained that intel from the field had been spotty, submersion of bad news and overstatement of the good news, and for the past year we have been misinformed about conditions in Vietnam.” DCI conclusion of trip: Washington’s policymaker’s ideas were too little too late, hitting the North would prove unavailing unless accompanied by considerable political improvement in the South. Consider using 2-3 of Taiwan’s Chi Nat division into the southern tip of So Vietnam’s delta.</p> <p>Sec Def [McNamara] concluded hitting North would be premature and South needed political and military improvement. Plans should be made for the U.S. to be in a position on 30 days’ notice to initiate a program of ‘Graduated Overt Military Pressure’ against North Vietnam.¹³⁷</p>
Mid 3/64	White House decision to begin contingency planning backstage, for selective attacks against the DRV by U.S. air and naval forces. ¹³⁸
3/16/64	Memo from Secretary McNamara to the president, reporting on a visit which he and General Taylor, then the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, had made to Vietnam. McNamara told the president bluntly, “the situation has unquestionably been growing worse, at least since September 1963. Prior to the memo said mission, it had been U.S. policy to help the So Vietnamese “win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy.” Memo became NSAM 288. ¹³⁹
3/17/64	“US Objectives in South Vietnam” NSAM 288 making NSC’s domino thesis an integral part of US policy.” ¹⁴⁰ It enlarged [the] limited U.S. objective in two ways. First, NSAM 288 expanded American goals significantly toward South Vietnam. The NSAM stated U.S. objectives toward South Vietnam to be: “we seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam . . . South Vietnam must be free . . . to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security.” The first sentence of the stated objectives would be interpreted for the next five years as the foundation of American policy toward South Vietnam, a policy which called for whatever action appeared necessary to defeat the communist takeover in South Vietnam. ¹⁴¹
4/64-5/64	SIGMA I (April-May 64) and II (September 64) war games fail to validate bombing success. ¹⁴²
5/2/64	Viet Cong sank the USS Card.
5/23/64	“Scenario for Strikes on North Vietnam” recommend that the U.S. and So Vietnamese aircraft bomb DRV communication lines, harbors, and industries, and suggested that the use of nuclear weapons be considered in

¹³⁷Ibid., 54-55.

¹³⁸Ibid., 53.

¹³⁹Davidson, 314.

¹⁴⁰Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 56.

¹⁴¹Davidson, 314.

¹⁴²Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 57-58.

¹⁴³Ibid., 60.

	the even communist China enter the war in force. ¹⁴³
5/25/64	Sec McNamara told Pres Johnson that “any action against North Vietnam must anticipate the commitment of a least seven divisions in Southeast Asia.” ¹⁴⁴
6/1/64	SOG completed 1/3 of ops, convoluted C2 = political control by AMB Saigon, military control by MACV, and mission control to SACS, permission for each and every mission. ¹⁴⁵
6/64	DCI letter to DoD suggesting CIA play a role in ‘covert psychological activity’ only. In effect, by reducing staffing over time and only assigning most junior officer to SOG, & CIA backed out of covert ops to the north. ¹⁴⁶
6/2/64	JCS recommended that the U.S. should take “positive, prompt, and meaningful military action” to “accomplish the destruction of No Vietnamese will and capabilities.” ¹⁴⁷
6/5/64	Ambassador Lodge in Saigon recommended heightened U.S. actions against the DRV: “Not only would screams from the North have a very tonic effect and strengthen morale here; it is also vital to frighten Ho.” ¹⁴⁸
6/8/64	CIA General Counsel advised DCI there was “a serious domestic problem in taking increasingly militant steps without any specific congressional approval.” ¹⁴⁹
6/9/64	Board of National Estimates,[NIE] called domino theses into question and disputed the theory saying with the exception of Cambodia, the rest of East Asia would probably not fall rapidly to Communist control [should Vietnam fall]. ¹⁵⁰
6/30/64	CDR, CINCPAC changes, Adm Felt to Adm Ulysses S. G. Sharp. ¹⁵¹
7/4/64	On 4 and 6 July, there were attacks on Special Forces camps.
7/24/64	DCI Mc Cone cautioned Pres Johnson that the VC was growing stronger and the situation increasingly critical. ¹⁵²
7/25/64	New Ambassador to Saigon Gen Max Taylor reported that Gen Khanh . . . believed the VC could not be defeated by counterinsurgency means alone, and therefore he had launched a deliberate campaign to get the U.S. to “march North”. Taylor added that strong pressures might develop with the GVN to seek a negotiated settlement. ¹⁵³
7/25/64	Taylor receives cautious OK to proceed with joint planning primarily on improving counter-insurgency efforts in the South and stopping short of involving overt U.S. military action against the North. Thus, just three months before the November Presidential election, the Johnson administration was preparing contingency plans for expanding U.S.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Conboy and Andradé, 95.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁷Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 60.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 63.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 56.

¹⁵¹Conboy and Andradé, 109.

¹⁵²Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 63.

¹⁵³Ibid.

	participation in the war but was keeping both the plans and the act of planning quiet. ¹⁵⁴
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7/26/64	CIA Saigon COS Peer DeSilva reported a crisis appeared at hand, “possibly involving the will of the present leadership to continue the war.” Gen Khanh now purported to believe that war weariness in the South had reached such an acute state that “heroic new measures, beyond the borders of South Vietnam” were now necessary to bring any prospect o victory.” ¹⁵⁵
8/2/64	Gulf of Tonkin incident and subsequent passing of ‘long-prepared’ Joint Resolution through the Congress. USS Maddox incident in the Tonkin Gulf was a direct result of 31 July Nasty [boat] attack on coastal defenses of Hon Me and Hon Nieu islands. ¹⁵⁶ and subsequent passing of ‘long-prepared’ Joint Resolution through the Congress. ¹⁵⁷
8/4/64	DCI McCone told President Johnson that the attacks had been a defensive reaction by the North Vietnamese to prior covert gunboat raids (part of OPLAN 34A) on the North Vietnamese islands: “They are responding out of pride and on the basis of defense considerations.” ¹⁵⁸
8/12/64 8/29/64	When president Johnson said that he would not expand the war by either bombing the north or by “committing a good many American boys to fighting a war that I think all to be fought by the boys of the Asia,” . . . he fooled Ho Chi Minh and his compatriots with American election year politics and polemics. ¹⁵⁹
9/9/64	DCI McCone told Ambassador Taylor that the IC now considered the situation in the South so fragile that it was doubtful national unity could be established there. In addition, the DCI judged the DRV could match any introduction of U.S. ground forces in the South. ¹⁶⁰
10/1/64	SNIE 53-2-64 held that the outlook among the So Vietnamese was one of “increasing defeatism, paralysis of leadership, friction with Americans, exploration of possible lines of political accommodation with the other side, and a general petering out of the war effort.” ¹⁶¹
10/9/64	SNIE 10-3-64 written specifically to address the Rostow theses, muted previous CIA skepticism and judged that the No Vietnamese, if subjected to a program of gradually increasing U.S. air attacks, would probably suspend military attacks in the South temporarily but would renew the insurgency there at a later date. State Dept’s INR dissented from this conclusion, contending that it was more likely Hanoi’s reaction would be to raise the

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 63.

¹⁵⁶Conboy and Andradé, 119.

¹⁵⁷Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 65.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Davidson, 327.

¹⁶⁰Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 65.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 66.

¹⁶²Ibid.

	tempo of Communist attacks in So Vietnam [State was correct]. ¹⁶²
10/11/64	Three Viet Cong battalions attacked ARVN troops in Tay Ninh Province and inflicted heavy casualties on the South Vietnamese units. ¹⁶³
10/14/64	Coup d'etat in USSR, Brezhnev became 1st Secretary, Kosygin became premier.

11/1/64	Just before the U.S. Presidential election, the Viet Cong mortared the U.S. air base at the Bien Hoa, a few [40] miles from Saigon. Four Americans were killed, [many wounded], five B-57 bombers destroyed, and eight other aircraft received major damage. ¹⁶⁴
11/64	President Johnson elected landslide victory. ¹⁶⁵
11/5/64	A think piece by chief Far East, Bill Colby to State's Bill Bundy and White House's Mike Forrestal on possible negotiated solution in Vietnam similar to Laos. ¹⁶⁶
11/19/64	Bundy group offered three theoretical options for U.S. air actions against DRV resulting in slow squeeze to gradual escalation, but had serious intelligence based skepticism about going North at all which were not mentioned and brushed aside as uncongenial or unlikely to sell. ¹⁶⁷
11/64	Amb Taylor flies in to DC to warn "we are playing a losing game in south Vietnam, that it was 'high time' we changed course, and the U.S. should launch 'immediate and automatic reprisals' against the DRV in the event of further enemy atrocities. ¹⁶⁸
12/1/64	MACV received hard intelligence that one NVA Main Force regiment had arrived in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam and that two more regiments were following closely behind. The three regiments, the 101st, 95th, and 32nd, meant that the entire 325th NVA division would shortly concentrate in northwestern South Vietnam. Make no mistake: this decision by the North Vietnamese Politburo to send its regular units into the south was one of the "hinge events" of Indochina war II. It changed the war from the Viet Cong insurrection, supported more or less openly by the Communist north, into an invasion of the sovereign nation of South Vietnam by North Vietnam. It began the change from a guerrilla-counterinsurgency war to a large-unit, the conventional war of divisions, corps, air forces, and naval flotillas. ¹⁶⁹
12/64	The Vietnamese military "Young Turks" had abolished a civilian council whose existence had been carefully nourished by the embassy as one means of legitimizing the military oligarchy. ¹⁷⁰
12/24/64	VC bombing of Brinks Hotel, American officers' quarts in Saigon. The Brink BOQ (Bachelor Officers' Quarters), was a run-down hotel in Saigon were

¹⁶³Davidson, 323.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 68.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 73.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 67.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 71.

¹⁶⁹Davidson, 324.

¹⁷⁰Allen, 205.

	junior U.S. officers were billeted. It was bombed and severely damaged. Two Americans were killed and 38 were wounded. ¹⁷¹
12/28/64	VC for the first time launched a division-sized action. The 9th Viet Cong Division seized the Catholic village of the Binh Gia Pat, 40 miles east of Saigon. In the ensuing battle, the Viet Cong destroyed the South Vietnamese 33rd ranger battalion and the 4th Marine Battalion, both elite ARVN outfits. ¹⁷²
12/30/64	Pres Johnson reply to Am Embassy: "I have never felt that this war will be won from the air." "We have been building our strength to fight this kind of war ever since 1961, and I myself am ready to substantially increase the number of Americans in Vietnam if it is necessary to provide this kind of fight force against the Viet Cong." ¹⁷³
2/7/65	VC attacked the U.S. installations at Pleiku in central South Vietnam, 8 KIA, 109 WIA and damaged numerous aircraft. A captured VC sapper reported Pleiku incident was planned 100 days before they struck, not deliberately arranged for Soviet visits. ¹⁷⁴ At 0200 (just at the end of Tet) the VC struck the U.S. airfield at Pleiku and at the helicopter base at camp Holloway, four miles away. Of the 137 Americans wounded, nine died and 76 had to be evacuated. 16 helicopters damaged or destroyed and six fixed wing aircraft damaged. ¹⁷⁵
2/7/65	Pres Johnson ordered attacks against No. Vietnam in retaliation for Pleiku.
2/7/65	(new) Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin visited Hanoi and McGeorge Bundy's first visit to South Vietnam, special Assistant for National Security Affairs. ¹⁷⁶
2/9/65	SecDef McNamara requested that the Joint Chiefs Of Staff submit recommendations for an eight-week air campaign against infiltration-associated targets in the lower portion of North Vietnam. ¹⁷⁷
2/10/65	Viet Cong attack on a U.S. base at Qui Nhon. ¹⁷⁸ Viet Cong attacked the enlisted men's billet at Qui Nhon, killing 23 American soldiers and wounding 21 others. U.S. Navy aircraft destroyed the Chanh Hoa barracks in southern North Vietnam while VNAF planes attacked the NVA military compound at Vit Thu Lu. ¹⁷⁹
2/13/65	Pres. Johnson ordered a "program of measured in limited air action jointly with the GVN against selected targets in the DRV." This program nicknamed ROLLING THUNDER would remain in effect for some three and a half years. ¹⁸⁰
2/26/65	Pres. Johnson approved the dispatch of two marine battalions to Da Nang. ¹⁸¹
3/2/65	Pres. Johnson ordered Gen Harold K. Johnson, the Army Chief Of Staff, to

¹⁷¹Davidson, 324.

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 71.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 72.

¹⁷⁵Davidson, 335-6.

¹⁷⁶Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 72.

¹⁷⁷Davidson, 336.

¹⁷⁸Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 73.

¹⁷⁹Davidson, 336.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 343.

	go to Vietnam to determine what could be done in So. Vietnam to improve the situation there. In Saigon, General Johnson conferred extensively with General Westmoreland, and Johnson's recommendations on his return to Washington reflected Westmoreland's concepts. Johnson recommended a 21-point program. Among his recommendations were two which would increase the effectiveness of ROLLING THUNDER. He also proposed that one U.S. Army division be sent to Vietnam to be employed either in the central Highlands, (Kontum and Pleiku provinces), or around the airfields at Tan Son Nhut (in Saigon) and Bien Hoa, nearby. General Johnson also recommended that additional helicopters and advisers be sent in along with logistical troops. ¹⁸²
3/9/65	U.S. and South Vietnamese planes bombed No Vietnam targets and 3,500 Marines landed at Da Nang "to protect its perimeter." ¹⁸³
3/65	A terrorist car bomb attacked the American embassy in March 1965, which killed more than a score of people outside the building and two inside, including a secretary in the CIA station. The station's front office was devastated--a half-dozen of its people including the station chief, were so seriously hurt that they had to be medically evacuated to the States. Two agency officers were totally blinded by flying glass; 60 other CIA personnel and embassy staffers inside the building were less seriously injured, most returning to duty the next day. ¹⁸⁴
3/31/65	Johnson admin committed U.S. combat--as opposed to advisory-troops to Vietnam.
4/2/65	DCI McCone reverses earlier cautions against provoking China and suggested that the U.S. forces strike hard and deep against the DRV. ¹⁸⁵ He fired off a memo saying not only that McNamara's planned land war would fail, but also that the bombing was ineffective. That same day, Johnson turned his attention to replacing McCone. ¹⁸⁶
4/6/65	Pres. Johnson in NSAM 328, approved most of General Johnson's proposals including those for toughening up ROLLING THUNDER, but he took no action on the recommendations calling for the logistics troops and the army division. The president did, however, prove the insertion of two additional marine battalions and one marine air squadron. Most significantly he "approved a change of mission for all marine battalions . . . to permit their more active use under conditions to be established and approved by the Secretary of Defense in Consultation with the Secretary of State." ¹⁸⁷
4/20/65	DCI McCone told Pres. Johnson of many serious objections to the developing U.S. military course in Vietnam. Focus was Sec Def McNamara's proposals to commit more U.S. combat troops in the South and continue bombing secondary targets in the DRV. At this final meeting new DCI Adm William F. Raborn, Jr. was present as DCI designate. ¹⁸⁸
4/28/65	Pres Johnson ordered troops to Dominican Republic to protect U.S. citizens

¹⁸²Ibid., 344.

¹⁸³Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 74.

¹⁸⁴Allen, 201.

¹⁸⁵Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 77.

¹⁸⁶Turner, 112.

¹⁸⁷Davidson, 344.

¹⁸⁸Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 78.

	endangered by clashes between communist, anticommunist, and other groups.
4/28/65	Final day of service for DCI McCone and final memo repeated many of cautions in a farewell note to President Johnson. ¹⁸⁹

5/6/65	DCI Raborn replied to request for response of McCone's memo that if not severe punishment by air to the DRV, we will in effect be pressing the conflict on the ground where our capabilities enjoy the least comparative advantage." And the U.S. must "not lose sight of the basically political aspect of the war. In the final analysis, it can only be won at the SVN hamlet level." ¹⁹⁰
5/11/65	More than a regiment of Viet Cong troops attacked Song Be in the Phuoc Long province. ¹⁹¹
6/7/65	Gen Westmoreland sent a message to Adm Sharp, CDR CINCPAC "... pointing out that the VC were better trained and equipped than ever before, and that they had not yet employed their full strength in the campaign. He condemned the ARVN severely. I see no course of action opened us except to reinforce our efforts in south Vietnam with additional U.S. or third country forces as rapidly as practicable. I am convinced that U.S. troops with their energy, mobility, and firepower can successfully take the fight to the Viet Cong." ¹⁹²
6/10/65	Vietcong struck the Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai with two regiments and inflicted a catastrophic defeat on ARVN in a battle lasting five days. ¹⁹³
6/22/65	JCS General Wheeler cabled Westmoreland that 44 combat battalions would be phased into South Vietnam as soon as possible. ¹⁹⁴
6/25/65	A North Vietnamese Main Force regiment took a district headquarters Kontum Province. Westmoreland fired off another cable late in June. He again asked for a speedy deployment of U.S. and Third Country combat forces and repeated his view that if South Vietnam was to survive, U.S. had to have "... a substantial and hard hitting offensive capability ... with troops that could be maneuvered freely." ¹⁹⁵
6/26/65	Gen Westmoreland received authority to commit U.S. troops "when in COMUSMACV's judgment their use is necessary to strengthen the relative position of GVN forces." ¹⁹⁶
6/27/65	Gen Westmoreland conducted an offensive operation in War Zone D, northwest of Saigon, using the U.S. 173rd Airborne brigade, an Australian battalion, and about five battalions of ARVN infantry. ¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 79.

¹⁹¹Davidson, 348.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 349.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

APPENDIX B

Key Persons, 1998--2003

Presidents, 1998-2003	
William J. Clinton	1993--2001
George W. Bush	2001--2009

Directors of Central Intelligence, 1998-2003	
George J. Tenet	7/11/1997--7/11/2004

Secretary of State, 1998-2003	
Madeleine K. Albright	1/17/97--1/19/2001
Colin L. Powell	1/20/2001--1/25/2005

National Security Advisor, 1998-2003	
Samuel (Sandy) R. Berger	1997--2001
Condoleezza Rice	1/2001--1/2005

Ambassadors to Kabul, Afghanistan, 1998-2003	
No direct diplomatic relations	
James Dobbins	11/2001--11/2003
Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad	11/2003--6/2005

Ambassadors to Baghdad, Iraq, 1998-2003	
No direct diplomatic relations	
L. Paul Bremer (U.S. Administrator)	5/2003--6/2004
John Negroponte	6/23/2004--4/20/2005

Secretary of Defense, 1998-2003	
William S. Cohen	1/24/1997--1/19/2001
Donald H. Rumsfeld	1/20/2001--12/17/2006

Chairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998-2003	
GEN Henry H. Shelton, USA	1997--2001
Gen Richard B. Myers, USAF	2001--2005

Army Chiefs of Staff, 1998-2003	
GEN Dennis J. Reimer	6/20/95--6/20/99
GEN Eric K. Shinseki	6/22/99--6/1/2003
GEN Peter J. Schoomaker	8/1/2003--4/2007

Key Events, until early 2003

Key Events, 1998-2003 and Road to War	
1981-1989	Term of U.S. President Ronald Regan.
Apr 1988	End of the Soviet / Afghan war, lots of unemployed fighters.
Aug 1988	Usama Bin Ladin emerges as emir of al Qaeda. ¹⁹⁸
1/89	Inauguration of U.S. President George H.W. Bush.
10/89	Fall of Berlin Wall signaling end of the Cold War.
11/24/89	Bin Ladin's rival, Palestinian cleric Abdullah Azzam and both sons killed by car bomb. ¹⁹⁹
8/90	Iraq invaded Kuwait.
Late 1990	Bin Ladin proposes to Saudi to retake Kuwait and is rebuffed, Saudi revokes his passport. ²⁰⁰
4/91	Bin Ladin flees to attend Islamic gathering in Pakistan. ²⁰¹
1991	Bin Ladin moves to Sudan. ²⁰²
Early 1992	Al Qaeda issues fatwa calling for jihad against "Western" occupation of Islamic lands. ²⁰³
Late 1992	Al Qaeda issues fatwa against U.S. forces in Somalia. ²⁰⁴
1/93	Inauguration of U.S. President William J. Clinton.
2/26/93	1st bombing of the World Trade Center. ²⁰⁵
10/93	Black hawk shot down in Somalia leading to U.S. withdrawal. ²⁰⁶
1994	Saudi freezes Bin Ladin's assets. ²⁰⁷
6/95	Assassination attempt against Egyptian Pres Muburak, tipping point to leave Sudan. ²⁰⁸
11/95	Car bomb in Riyadh, kills five U.S. and two Indians. ²⁰⁹
5/19/96	Bin Ladin leaves Sudan, fleeing to Afghanistan via Pakistan. ²¹⁰
6/96	Khobar Towers truck bomb, 19 U.S. killed, 372 wounded. ²¹¹
1996	CIA establishes a special unit dedicated to Bin Ladin. ²¹²
9/96	Bin Ladin joins forces with the Taliban. ²¹³

¹⁹⁸Lee Hamilton and Thomas H. Kean, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 56.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰Ibid., 57.

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Ibid., 59.

²⁰⁴Ibid.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 60.

²⁰⁶Ibid.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 57.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 62.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 60.

²¹⁰Ibid., 63.

²¹¹Ibid., 60.

²¹²Ibid., 109.

²¹³Ibid., 65.

3/97	Bin Ladin inflammatory interview with CNN. ²¹⁴
1/17/98	Monica Lewinsky scandal becomes public and lasts for 10 months.
2/98	Bin Ladin fatwa against the U.S. ²¹⁵
6/98	New York grand jury indicts Bin Ladin, announced in 11/98. ²¹⁶
8/7/98	U.S. Embassy bombing in Kenya and Tanzanian, killing 12 U.S. and 300 others, injuring thousands. ²¹⁷
8/20/98	President Clinton authorized a cruise missile strikes against desert target. ²¹⁸
12/4/98	Presidential Daily Brief (PDB) citing Bin Ladin preparing to hijack U.S. aircraft and other attacks. Lists activities in Malaysia, Yemen, and movement of containers to Afghanistan. ²¹⁹
12/20/98	Principals consider and decline to strike Bin Ladin in Kandahar. ²²⁰
12/98+2/99	Memorandum of Notifications to capture Bin Ladin. ²²¹
10/12/2000	USS <i>Cole</i> bombing, killing 17 U.S. Navy personnel and injuring another 39. ²²²
11/2000	Beginning of the 'chad' election dilemma in Florida between Gore and Bush.
1/2001	Inauguration of U.S. President George W Bush.
1/2001	About a week before inauguration, 2.5 hour 'secrets Briefing' by DCI Tenant and DDO Pavitt to President-elect Bush and Vice President-elect Cheney. They told him that bin Ladin and his network were a "tremendous threat" which was "immediate." There's no doubt that bin Ladin was coming at the U.S. again, they said, but it was not clear when, where or how. ²²³
4/2001	The NSC deputies committee made up of the number twos in each major department and agency, recommended that President Bush adopt a policy that would include a serious effort to arm the Northern Alliance, the loose confederation of various warlords and tribes in Afghanistan that opposed the Taliban regime that harbored bin Laden. ²²⁴
7/2001	NSC deputies devise a plan not just to roll back al-Qaeda but to eliminate it. It was a plan to go on the offensive and destroy the Taliban. The plan was ready on 4 September 2001 that would give the CIA and hundred 25 million to 200 million a year to arm the Northern Alliance. ²²⁵
9/10/01	National Security Presidential Directive 9 (NSPD) was ready to go to the president to eliminate Al Qaeda. ²²⁶
9/11/2001	World Trade Center and Pentagon catastrophic bombings killing 3018 U.S. and other nation's citizens.

²¹⁴Ibid.

²¹⁵Ibid., 66.

²¹⁶Ibid., 110.

²¹⁷Ibid., 70.

²¹⁸Ibid., 134.

²¹⁹Ibid., 128-9.

²²⁰Ibid., 131.

²²¹Ibid., 132-3.

²²²Woodward, 40.

²²³Ibid., 34.

²²⁴Ibid., 35.

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶Ibid., 36.

9/12/01	Sec Def Rumsfeld raised the question of Iraq at the 4:00 p.m. NSC. Meeting. The consensus was not to make Iraq a principal target in the first round in the war on terrorism as advocated by his deputy Paul D. Wolfowitz. ²²⁷
9/13/01	9:30 a.m. NSC meeting where CIA counterterrorism chief Cofer Black presented details on CIA proposal to eliminate the Taliban, with use of Special Forces teams from the U.S. military and U.S. Air Force bombings. ²²⁸
9/14-16/01	President Bush and senior national security advisers went Camp David for a weekend of meetings. The team went over in detail and all encompassing plan proposed by the CIA. ²²⁹
9/17/01	President Bush signed a Memorandum Of Notification modifying the finding that President Reagan signed on 12 May 1986. The MON empowered the CIA to disrupt the al-Qaeda network and other local terrorist networks on a worldwide scale, using lethal covert action to keep the role of U.S. hidden. President Bush also signed a two and a half page list outlining orders and action steps that departments and agencies of the U.S. government would take involving financial pressure, diplomatic action, military planning and covert action. ²³⁰
9/21/01	At 9:30 a.m NSC meeting, press leaks threaten U.S. security and coalition building and are an intelligence concern voiced by DCI Tenet. ²³¹
10/7/01	Operation Enduring Freedom begins.
9/12/02	President Bush's speech to the U.N. general assembly called for new resolution on weapons inspections. ²³²
11/8/02	Unanimous U.N. resolution 1441 calling Saddam's regime to declare and disarm itself of all weapons of mass destruction. ²³³
12/7/02	Iraq submitted a 12,000 page document stating that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. ²³⁴
1/28/03	President Bush spends ½ of the state of the union address laying out a case against Saddam alleging that he had weapons of mass destruction and connections to al-Qaeda terrorists. ²³⁵
2/5/03	Sec State Powell presented a 90 minute audiovisual report containing new allegations against Saddam, including intercepted conversations and satellite photography, of Iraq's secret weapons programs and cover-ups. ²³⁶

²²⁷Ibid., 49.

²²⁸Ibid., 51.

²²⁹Ibid., 72.

²³⁰Ibid., 101.

²³¹Ibid., 110.

²³²Ibid., 353.

²³³Ibid.

²³⁴Ibid., 354.

²³⁵Ibid., 355.

²³⁶Ibid.

3/17/03	The second U.N. resolution against Iraq allowed to die because it lacked support of Russia and France. President Bush sets a 48 hour ultimatum for Saddam and his two sons to leave Iraq. President Bush announced the coalition would go against Saddam without an U.N. resolution. ²³⁷
3/19/03	Beginning of the war in Iraq. ²³⁸
4/9/03	Regime change accomplished in Iraq. President Bush acknowledged that the U.S. military presence in Iraq could continue for two years. ²³⁹

²³⁷Ibid., 356.

²³⁸Ibid., 353.

²³⁹Ibid., 357.

APPENDIX C

Lessons for the intelligence professional from Vietnam per Harold K. Ford:

1. A tough occupational hazard is the eternal problem of trying to get policymakers to absorb one's intelligence reports, analyses, and cautions. The best and the brightest, as Bill Bundy later admitted, we're simply too busy much of the time to absorb the judgments of relatively junior, unknown intelligence officers.
2. It is sometimes tough trying to get an even higher intelligence authority to pass on one's views, untrammelled, to the policymakers. Vietnam analyses over the years were at times substantially rosied up by the views or intercessions of DCIs McCone and Helms and the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs (SAVA), George Carver.
3. Over the years some CIA estimates and judgments on Vietnam were incorrect or overly wishy-washy, but overall the record was a good one, much better than that of any other entity in town--and some of CIA's officers registered outstanding records for foresight. *In Retrospect* laments the fact that there were no Vietnam experts on hand to guide and caution top policymakers. Too bad.
4. Yet CIA officers had an easy time of it compared to the policymakers. The latter were faced with a constantly deteriorating situation in South Vietnam, as well as with other pressing problems elsewhere in the world. They could not just kibitz; they had to act.
5. There was no substitute for being immersed in the history, politics, and society of a region, in this case Indochina. The best analytic records were generally registered by those officers who had had considerable such exposure.
6. The ideal combination of such exposure was to have had experience both in the field and in Washington.
7. Those officers who best served CIA's purpose were those who went where the evidence on Vietnam took them, tried to tell it like it is, and did not pre-censor their judgments in order to sell them to higher authority known or believed to have strong contrary views of the question at hand.
8. Perhaps *the* central lesson for CIA officers which *In Retrospect* provides is the differing regard McNamara did or did not pay Agency judgments at different times. In short, his record and his book demonstrate the unhappy, eternal truth that intelligence is of use to decision makers primarily when it accords with their own views, or when they can use that intelligence to help sell their own particular policy arguments.
9. In sum, at least in the view of this author [H.K. Ford], the essence of Mr. McNamara's Vietnam policymaking and of America's fate in that war was captured years ago by a former West Pointer and former CIA Vietnam chief of station, Peer DeSilva: '[McNamara] simply had no comprehension of how the war should be handled. . . . Fundamentally we lost because we were arrogant, prideful, and dumb.'²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰Harold P. Ford, Thoughts Engendered by Robert McNamara's *in Retrospect*, Available from https://www.cia.gov/csi/kent_csi/docs/v39i5a12p.htm; Internet; accessed on 2 February 2007.

APPENDIX D

Extract concerning intelligence from strategic lessons learned in Vietnam per the BDM Corporation, published in 1980:

Incomplete, inaccurate, or untimely knowledge of one's enemies (his history, goals, organization, leadership, habits, strengths and weaknesses, and above all, his character and will) results in inferior policies and strategies; raises the cost in time, treasure, anguish and blood; and increases the possibility of the ultimate defeat of one's initial objectives. Know your enemy!²⁴¹

To support an in-theater intelligence effort, an all source intelligence center, including SIGINT, should be established under the theater commander (unified's, sub unified's or combined) in country or nearby to fuse the collected information. Analysts at this center would require access to the same highly sensitive information which the senior intelligence analysts in Washington would have.²⁴²

Unit commanders and their staffs at brigade and possibly battalion level should be cleared for SIGINT and should receive direct SIGINT support during combat operations to optimize tactical operations and fully exploit all-source intelligence.²⁴³

If the intelligence effort is to succeed in the first critical period of a crisis, there must exist a sufficient body of trained intelligence personnel in all specialties of the intelligence field, and personnel activities must have the capability of identifying and assigning to appropriate headquarters, field organizations, and combat units the requisite intelligence specialists.²⁴⁴

Insurgents operating in territory familiar to them will succumb to regular forces only if the regulars know and understand their insurgent enemy and then fully exploit their own mobility, firepower, communications, another modern advantages without counterproductive fallout among any indigenous populous. That requires good intelligence.²⁴⁵

Accurate intelligence information is fundamental to the formation of sound contingency plans. It is imperative that this intelligence be unbiased, objective, and drawn from all available sources. The intelligence information may be coupled with a scenario in order to give policymakers a realistic expectation of the outcome of their proposed actions. When an actual crisis occurs, policymakers should have faith in a contingency plan which has been tested by scenarios and war-gaming simulations.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975, Omnibus Executive Summary* (McLean, VA: BDM Corporation, 1980), I-13.

²⁴²*Ibid.*, VI-25.

²⁴³*Ibid.*

²⁴⁴*Ibid.*

²⁴⁵*Ibid.*

²⁴⁶BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975*, Vol 5, 3-22.

APPENDIX E

Extract from the RAND Corporation regarding intelligence as to lessons and mistaken lessons in Vietnam, printed in 1969:

Those involved in the [Vietnam] war know that disagreement over just how good or bad the enemy's morale was or is never ceased, and that methodological disputes over how best to measure it are equally sharp. Lessons cry out to be learned in that area, but there, too, the pitfalls are waiting for the analyst.²⁴⁷

What is so very important with regard to villager attitudes as well as the morale of the enemy soldiers is, of course, that--had we had an accurate picture from the beginning--we might (1) not have become engaged in the venture at all, or (2) engaged in it very differently.²⁴⁸

But in the Vietnam War the strategists had to fall back on an intricate system of "indicators" that would tell them whether they were ahead or behind. With regard to the standards they came to apply, many lessons will yet have to be learned, the outstanding one of which may be--but is not necessarily--the simple one that if you cannot discern quite easily that you are winning, then you are not, and no further studies based on indicators are needed.²⁴⁹

At another level, we may ask whether the United States, for all the information it has acquired about the enemy, has fully understood it. There is considerable room left for doubt when one considers for how long the North Vietnamese have been regarded as mere instruments of Soviet and Chinese policy; as constantly in danger of cracking under the stress of the bombing; as embroiled in a leadership dispute among pro-Peking, Pro-Moscow, and middle-of-the-road advocates. Similarly, doubts about American understanding must linger when we consider the surprise in certain quarters about Hanoi's stubborn determination to continue the war despite all our figures about the enemy's manpower and equipment losses and recruitment difficulties; or when we observed U.S. insistence that Hanoi give a quid pro quo for cessation of the bombing, and then blanched at new Viet Cong attacks on the cities; or when we demand the complete withdrawal of 'North Vietnamese' troops as a condition for the departure of American forces. In all these cases, important questions are raised about our understanding of the enemy--of this capacity for resistance, of his zealous independence from foreign pressures and undesirable foreign council, of his confidence in time and tenacity, and of his refusing to concede on his (but not on our) right to be fighting in South Vietnam.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷Gurtov and Kellen, 20-21.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 21.

²⁴⁹Ibid., 18.

²⁵⁰Ibid., 8-9.

APPENDIX F

Extract concerning strategic decision making from strategic lessons learned in Vietnam per the BDM Corporation, published in 1980:

The U.S. is likely to do itself and its ally more harm than good if it commits its power and prestige to the preservation of a weak and struggling nation without first understanding and interpreting correctly the client state's history, culture, economy, environment, political dynamics, and potential enemies--both external and especially internal; the U.S. must understand its own strengths and weaknesses and evaluate their likely impact on a fragile, underdeveloped society and its institutions. This generality, however, does not provide policy-makers with a built in rationale for inaction or vacillation when vital issues or interests are at stake.²⁵¹

There are limits to American power. Being a superpower with an extensive arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles plus a powerful modern armed force does not guarantee that a foreign policy which is designed to exploit those as well as other national strengths, such as economic and technological powers, will be successful. The limitations extend to the American Chief Executive, whose responsibilities have not diminished with regard to the formulation of U.S. foreign policy or for the security of the U.S., but whose power to wage war or commit U.S. combat forces will require the support of the American people and the Congress in the future. Planners, be they military or civilian, must be attuned to these factors as they prepare for the contingencies of the future.²⁵²

Decision makers--civilian and military--must listen to a spectrum of those who do have a time and ability to think, and must require their overworked staffs to do their homework. The enemy in Vietnam worked harder and better at analyzing our significant strengths and weaknesses than did we concerning his.²⁵³

For the most part, American leaders (civil and military) tend to be impatient, action-oriented pragmatists who lack a solid historical and philosophical foundation. Therefore, when historical precedents (e.g., "No more Munich's!" or "Who lost China?") are cited as bases for political-military action they are more likely to be emotion-laden slogans than well analyzed and relevant principles. Straight line extrapolation of such 'maxims' from one era and environment to other quite different ones can lead to fundamental misunderstandings and thus serious problems.²⁵⁴

Goals, policies, strategies, force structures, and tactics which are based on faulty, inaccurate, and/or untimely appreciations of the past, current, and projected conflict environment (all critical elements) are bound to be inferior, which significantly raises the cost, time, and chances of achieving ones objectives; nor should one's assessments be unduly biased by, or limited to, one's own experiences, perceptions, and concepts.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975, Omnibus Executive Summary*, II-16.

²⁵²BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975*, Vol 5, EX-16.

²⁵³BDM Corporation, *A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, 1945-1975*, Vol 1, I-33.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*, I-33.

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*, I-32.

APPENDIX G

Chapter Summary Tables

Chapter One Table

Table of Intelligence Issues, 1960-mid 1965	I	P
1. Avoid excess compartmentalization of information between disciplines	✓	
2. An appropriate method of communicating intelligence to allow absorption by busy policy-makers	✓	
3. Trust and confidence in intelligence reporting		✓
4. Avoid 'politicization' of intelligence		✓
5. Cultural knowledge to understand an adversary and experience in the DC arena	✓	
6. Local access to all sources of intelligence with the ability to fuse intelligence into a single picture	✓	
7. Quality and timely intelligence, free of bias	✓	

Chapter Two Table

Table of Intelligence Issues 1998-2001			I	P
1. Avoid excess compartmentalization of information between agencies, domestic and foreign (structural barriers by laws) [9/11]		✓		
2. Lack of common standards and practices across the foreign-domestic divide [9/11]		✓		
3. Divided management of national intelligence capabilities [9/11]		✓		
4. Weak capacity to set priorities and move resources [9/11]		✓		
5. Too many jobs for the DCI [9/11]				✓
6. Too complex and secret, (compartmentalization) [9/11]		✓		
7. Local access to all sources with the ability to fuse intelligence, [greatest 9/11 problem as defined by DCI Tenet]		✓		
8. Trust and confidence in intelligence reporting [USD(P) Feith]				✓
9. Avoid ‘politicization’ of intelligence [USD(P) Feith]				✓

Chapter 3 Combined Summary Table

Table of Intelligence Issues		
from:	and Pre-9/11	Same?
pre-Vietnam		
	1. Avoid excess compartmentalization of information between agencies, domestic and foreign [9/11, structural barriers by laws]	No
1. Avoid excess compartmentalization of information between disciplines [G. Allen, BDM]	6. Too complex and secret, [9/11, compartmentalization]	Yes
7. Quality and timely intelligence free of bias [H. Ford]	2. Lack of common standards and practices across the foreign-domestic divide [9/11]	Yes
	3. Divided management of national intelligence capabilities [9/11]	No
2. An appropriate method of communicating intelligence to allow absorption by busy policy-makers [H. Ford]		No
	4. Weak capacity to set priorities and move resources [9/11]	No
5. Cultural knowledge to understand an adversary and experience in the DC arena [H. Ford, BDM, RAND]		No
	5. Too many jobs for the DCI [9/11]	No
6. Local access to all sources with the ability to fuse intelligence [BDM, G. Allen]	7. Local access to all sources with the ability to fuse intelligence [greatest 9/11 problem as defined by DCI Tenet]	Yes
3. Trust and confidence in intelligence reporting. [H. Ford, BDM]	8. Trust and confidence in intelligence reporting, [USD(P) Feith issue]	Yes
4. Avoid ‘politicization’ of intelligence {H. Ford]	9. Avoid ‘politicization’ of intelligence, [USD(P) Feith issue]	Yes

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